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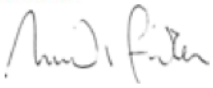
Supervisor's name (PLEASE PRINT): Miranda Fricker	Signature: 	Date: 05/08/2-18

Bad Judgement

An Essay in Vice Epistemology

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis provides an account of the nature of intellectual vice. An intellectual vice is an aspect of someone's character that makes them a bad intellectual agent, or bad knower. Previous accounts of the intellectual vices have tended to identify them with either the disposition to have bad epistemic motivations, or the disposition to produce bad epistemic effects. I argue for a new view that can overcome the difficulties faced by both of these accounts. According to this view, there are two distinct forms of intellectual vice: vices that involve motivations towards bad epistemic ends, and vices that involve some entrenched pattern of *bad judgement*.

I begin, in Chapter 1, with a critical discussion of the notion of intellectual virtue. This discussion will both instil a clearer idea of the kind of trait I am seeking to accommodate within an account of intellectual vice, and provide some promising starting points for the discussion of vice that follows. Then, in Chapters 2 and 3, I critique the two most prominent analyses of intellectual vice: accounts that focus on bad motivations, and accounts that focus on bad consequences. Motivational approaches, I argue in Chapter 2, are unable to account for cases of agents who are eminently vicious despite their being genuinely motivated by the epistemic good. Consequentialist accounts, meanwhile, are unable to accommodate the distinctive normative quality of the language of virtue and vice, a difficulty that I discuss in Chapter 3. I turn to provide my positive proposal in Chapter 4. I draw upon the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, to develop a hitherto unrecognised form of intellectual viciousness: the viciousness of having bad judgment. This leaves us with a bifurcated conception of intellectual vice, according to which agents are vicious either if they take bad epistemic ends, as argued for by motivational theorists, or if they have an entrenched pattern of bad judgement. I demonstrate the explanatory power of this account in Chapter 5, by way of an in-depth discussion of the vice of intellectual snobbery.

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Contents

Introduction

Most, if not quite all, humans engage in intellectual activities of some form or another. We undertake inquiries, to try and find things out about the world. We engage in deliberations, in order to determine the best of two or more options. We reflect upon past experiences, in an attempt to ascertain what lessons can be drawn from them. Whilst these activities might be near universal, how we conduct them varies significantly from person to person. Consider a fairly mundane example: checking the news. Some people do this by reading a newspaper, others by talking to a neighbour, still others by scrolling through Twitter. Of those who read newspapers, some get a specific publication delivered to their home, whilst others glance through whatever copies are left behind on the bus. Of those who have a newspaper delivered, some will work through it carefully from cover to cover, whilst others jump to the sections or stories that they find most interesting. Of those who read it methodically, some will read critically, whilst others will simply absorb what is put in front of them. And so on.

As with any intellectual activity, all sorts of different factors go into determining how any given person engages with the news. These might include the time and resources they have at their disposal, or the profession and institutional roles that they occupy. One important part of this determination, however, will be their intellectual *character*, the kind of person they are, intellectually speaking. Whether somebody is patient or impatient, for example, will likely have some bearing upon how much attention they devote to any given article. Whether they are open-minded or closed-minded may well impact whether they choose to receive all their news from a single source, or whether they consult a variety of mediums that present contrasting viewpoints. Whether they are curious or incurious, intellectually lazy or inquisitive will probably go a significant way towards determining whether they even bother to check the news at all.

Some of the traits just listed – patience, open-mindedness, curiosity, inquisitiveness – are intuitive examples of the kinds of qualities that make somebody a good intellectual agent. They are, in other words, intellectual *virtues*. Others – impatience, closed-mindedness, incuriosity, laziness – are the kinds of traits that make somebody a bad intellectual agent. They are intellectual *vices*. Being intellectually vicious, or having a bad intellectual character, is different from having bad eyesight or not being very good at mental arithmetic. These latter kinds of quality are epistemically bad, but they are not contemptible or reprehensible in the same way that being closed-minded or lazy is. People who are intellectually vicious are not only poorly equipped for inquiry, they are so in a way that make us think less of them.

This thesis is about the intellectual vices[1]. It seeks to explain what it is to be intellectually vicious, and why it is that the intellectual vices enjoy this distinctive disvalue. Specifically, it argues for a novel view of the nature of intellectual vice that recognises two distinct forms of viciousness. The prevailing philosophical orthodoxy maintains that intellectual vices involve some failure to be motivated by epistemic goods like truth, knowledge, and understanding. I argue that this focus is too narrow and fails to account for the viciousness of people who *are* genuinely motivated by epistemic goods, but who nevertheless conduct their intellectual activities in eminently problematic ways. I draw upon the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, in order to explain the viciousness of such agents. According to the Aristotelian virtue ethical tradition, the truly virtuous agent is the person who not only takes the right ends, but who has the practical wisdom to select the right means towards these ends. I adapt this picture to the virtue epistemological context, and argue that certain deficiencies of practical wisdom – certain forms of what I call *bad judgement* – are constitutive of intellectual vice. I thus present a distinctive bifurcated conception of intellectual vice. People can be intellectually vicious if they are disposed to take bad epistemic ends, or if they have an entrenched pattern of bad judgement.

The aim of this thesis is thus to help correct what remains a significant imbalance within the literature on virtue epistemology. Virtue epistemology is the branch of epistemology that seeks to provide a framework for the evaluation of intellectual agents. However, as the name suggests, to date it has focussed for the most part on the qualities make somebody a *good*, or virtuous, intellectual agent[2]. It is only very recently that sustained attention has been directed to the sub-field that Quassim Cassam (2016) calls 'vice epistemology', which focusses directly on the intellectual vices. In this Introduction I will provide some background both to virtue epistemology generally, and to the notion of

[1] For the most part, I prefer the term 'intellectual vice' to 'epistemic vice'. This is because I feel 'intellectual' better captures the broad domain of evaluation that I am interested in than does 'epistemic', which has more explicit, and narrow, connections to truth. Creativity is an intellectual virtue, for example, but it does not feel quite right to describe it as an epistemic one. This is not a strong preference, however, and as is now customary in the literature I will sometimes use the two interchangeably.

[2] This thesis will focus more or less exclusively on virtue epistemology as a framework for the analysis of individual epistemic agents. There is interesting and important work to be done in exploring whether other types of agents (such as institutions) and perhaps even non-agential entities (such as policies) can be intellectually virtuous or vicious, but this is a complication I will not directly address here.

intellectual vice specifically. In Section 1, I offer a brief overview of virtue epistemology, and situate my project within this field. Then, in Section 2, I provide a more comprehensive introduction to the intellectual vices by way of a tentative taxonomy, before outlining some motivating reasons as to why they represent an important object of philosophical analysis. I conclude this Introduction, in Section 3, with a roadmap of the thesis to come.

1 Virtue Epistemology

Historically, it was not unusual for philosophers to devote sustained attention to the evaluation of intellectual character. In addition to his enormously influential discussion of the moral virtues, for example, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* identifies several distinct intellectual virtues (Book VI), as does Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* (2a.2ae). A number of canonical early modern philosophers also examined the issue of what makes somebody a good, or bad, intellectual agent, including Locke (notably *Of the Conduct of the Understanding*), Bacon (*Novum Organon*) and Hume (for example, in the *Treatise of Human Nature* 1.3 and 1.4)[3]. More recently, it was a central topic of interest for the classical pragmatists, including Dewey (*How We Think*) and Peirce (in 'The Fixation of Belief').

Despite this rich philosophical lineage, however, the qualities of the good intellectual agent was for many years a neglected topic within analytic epistemology. Instead, for much of the 20th Century the core topics of analytic epistemology all focussed on questions pertaining to the evaluation of belief states; notably, what is it that makes a belief justified, or count as knowledge. Discussion of the intellectual agents who serve as bearers of these belief states was scarce and, for the most part, derivative of these prior questions. This changed in the 1980s, with the publication of Ernest Sosa's 'The Raft and the Pyramid' (1980) and Lorraine Code's 'Toward a "Responsibilist" Epistemology' (1984). Both theorists, frustrated by the impasses reached in these core epistemological puzzles and inspired by a rejuvenated interest in virtue within ethical theorising, argued for a shift in attention back to the intellectual agent. Specifically, both argued that developing a concept of intellectual virtue could help breathe fresh impetus into contemporary epistemology, just as the concept of moral virtue had done in ethics. For Sosa, this fresh impetus would mean making progress in the core epistemological debates; for Code, it would mean shifting attention entirely and focussing instead on developing a fleshed-out notion of epistemic responsibility.

These papers by Sosa and Code are notable not only for their role in reviving interest in the intellectual virtues, but also for how they have set the shape for the subsequent development of the field. Virtue epistemology is generally split into two different strains,

[3] Corneanu (2011) offers rich discussion of the early modern focus on intellectual character. For a modern reconstruction of Hume's virtue epistemology, see Vitz (2009).

virtue *reliabilism* and virtue *responsibilism*, and this split has its roots in the differences between Sosa and Code's work. Conventionally, these two strains are differentiated by the different types of trait or quality that they class as intellectual virtues (see Axtell 1997; Battaly 2008; Turri, Alfano, and Greco 2017). According to this characterisation, reliabilists follow Sosa in understanding intellectual virtues to be reliable epistemic powers or *faculties*, with paradigmatic virtues including things like memory, perception, and introspection. Responsibilists, on the other hand, follow Code in thinking of virtues as *character traits*, with paradigmatic examples being things like open-mindedness, intellectual humility, and conscientiousness.

This way of distinguishing between reliabilism and responsibilism, in which the former argues that virtues are faculties and the latter that they are character traits, might be helpful in getting an initial feel for the difference between the two sub-fields, but ultimately the supposedly clear picture it presents is easily muddied. For a start, a number of virtue theorists have argued that we do not need to choose between one or the other of these conceptions of virtue; instead, we should embrace a form of pluralism, according to which both reliable faculties *and* good character traits can count as virtues (Baehr 2011; Battaly 2015)[4]. Perhaps more significantly, it is not clear that reliabilists actually have the grounds by which to exclude certain character traits from their taxonomy of virtues. As Jason Baehr (2011, 2015) has argued, character traits like carefulness and diligence appear to be helpful in reaching the truth in just the ways specified by reliabilist accounts. If this is the case, these traits should count as reliabilist virtues in just the same way that faculties do. Sosa (2015) has only gone some way towards acknowledging this point, accepting merely that 'agential competences' can count as virtues, though it has been endorsed more whole-heartedly by other prominent reliabilists, such as John Greco (2000)[5].

The distinction between faculty and character virtues thus does not really get to the heart of the difference between reliabilism and responsibilism. A more helpful approach for understanding this difference is to focus not on the qualities that are held up as paradigmatic examples of each class of virtue, but on the theoretical roots and philosophical ambitions of these two forms of virtue epistemology. This helps to clarify that responsibilism and reliabilism aren't best understood as competing analyses of the nature of intellectual virtue; rather, they are fundamentally different projects with fundamentally different aims[6].

As we saw with Sosa above, virtue reliabilism was initiated as an attempt to make progress with the core problems of analytic epistemology. Its main theoretical antecedent was the process reliabilist theory of justification. Process reliabilists, roughly, argued that beliefs are justified if they emerge from a belief-forming process that reliably leads to truth (Goldman

[4] For a critical response to Battaly's call for virtue pluralism, see van Zyl (2015).
[5] A more ambitious attempt at 'unification' of reliabilism and responsibilism is made by Lepock (2011). He argues that both faculty virtues and character virtues contribute to the cognitive goal of believing significant truths, they simply do so in different ways.
[6] This reading of the responsibilist/ reliabilist divide is similar to that of Fleisher (2017).

1979). The central innovation of virtue reliabilism is to think of these reliable processes specifically as *virtues*, understood as a kind of ability or competence. This innovation, it was argued, would allow reliabilists to circumvent some of the problems afflicting simple process reliabilism (Greco 1993, 1999). This key development notwithstanding, virtue reliabilists have nonetheless retained this focus on the core problems within analytic epistemology, with seminal reliabilist texts by Sosa (2007), Greco (2010), and Duncan Pritchard (2012) all exploring issues to do with the nature of justification, the nature and value of knowledge, or how to respond to the sceptical challenge.

The genealogy of virtue responsibilism is a bit more complicated. Many early responsibilists, Code included, were themselves influenced by Sosa's argument that a shift towards the epistemic agent could resolve some of the seemingly intractable impasses reached by analytic epistemologists. However, the development of responsibilism was also much more heavily influenced by ethics. Both responsibilists and reliabilists, it is true, drew inspiration from the virtue turn within ethics, and Sosa explicitly models his account of epistemic justification on an account of moral (or at least practical) justification (Sosa 1980: 23). However, it was virtue responsibilists like Code (1984), James Montmarquet (1993), and, most significantly, Linda Zagzebski (1996) that opted to explicitly model their understanding of epistemic virtue on the virtues of character – things like courage, justice, and benevolence – that are familiar from Aristotelian virtue ethics[7].

This mix of philosophical traditions, the epistemological and the ethical, partly explains the more heterogeneous set of aims and projects that responsibilist theorists have undertaken. Early responsibilists, much like their reliabilist counterparts, did attempt to put their notion of intellectual virtue to work in the context of the core topics of analytic epistemology, offering accounts of the nature of justification (Montmarquet 1993; Fairweather 2001) and of the nature and value of knowledge (Zagzebski 1996, 2003). Such arguments have become less prevalent, however, with a growing recognition that responsibilism is poorly equipped to tackle these issues, at least alone[8]. Its true significance, instead, lies in its reorienting potential. Recall that Code first invoked intellectual virtue in an attempt not to account for the nature of justification and knowledge, but to move beyond these issues and substantiate instead a notion of epistemic responsibility. The turn towards character, both for her and for subsequent theorists, was most significant not because it could provide answers to the central problems of epistemology, but because it could enable a "rethinking of just what the central problems of epistemology are" (Hookway 2003a: 185).

[7] This is not to say that reliabilists were divorced from the virtue tradition in ethics. As Sosa notes, the conception of virtue they defend is a conception, familiar from both Plato and Aristotle, according to which "anything with a function – natural or artificial – does have virtues" (1991: 271). Our virtues as knowers are those qualities that endow us with truths, just as the virtue of a knife is its sharpness.

[8] See Roberts and Wood (2007), Baehr (2011), Ahlstrom-Vij (2017), and Fleisher (2017). This is not to say that responsibilism is totally irrelevant in the context of these discussions. Baehr, for example, has suggested that whilst we cannot define justification in terms of intellectual virtue, it may have a subsidiary role to play in an account of justification. Both Greco (2010) and Lepock (2011) have argued that the character virtues might have an important, perhaps essential, role to play in our acquisition of higher value epistemic states.

Rather than retain a focus on issues of knowledge and justification, directing our attention towards intellectual agents and their characters allows us to pose deeper questions about what the good intellectual life looks like.

Despite both developing a notion of intellectual virtue, responsibilism and reliabilism are therefore not best understood as competing analyses. Rather, in their most plausible and interesting forms they comprise two fundamentally different philosophical projects, each of which invokes a fundamentally different kind of virtue. In looking to build upon process reliabilist foundations and provide answers to the core problems of analytic epistemology, virtue reliabilists are primarily interested in qualities whose reliability is relatively uncontroversial. They thus identify as paradigmatic virtues normatively thin qualities like memory or vision. In looking to reorient epistemology and provide a framework for analysing, evaluating, and guiding our intellectual agency, responsibilists invoke a normatively much thicker conception of virtue. Of course, since these two forms of virtue epistemology do not offer competing analyses of one epistemic quality but are in fact interested in very different things, any given undertaking within virtue epistemology need not explore these two theoretical strains in tandem. Accordingly, I will not be discussing the reliabilist conception of vice in this thesis[9]. Instead, my central concern is how aspects of our intellectual character shape our lives as knowers. Specifically, I am interested in the comparatively neglected question of what kind of traits are constitutive of *bad* intellectual agency. It is to these intellectual vices that I now turn.

2 Intellectual Vice

What are the intellectual vices, and why should we care about them? The pre-theoretical description I have relied upon so far, that an intellectual vice is a character trait that makes somebody a bad intellectual agent, is both very loose and very abstract. Providing some examples will go some way towards giving us a firmer grip on the concept, and illustrating its practical and theoretical significance.

I have already provided several examples of traits that seem to fit my pre-theoretical characterisation: impatience, closed-mindedness, intellectual laziness, and so on. Rather than simply listing further examples, however, I want to draw upon a taxonomical strategy introduced by Baehr in the context of his discussion of intellectual virtue (Baehr 2011: 17-22). Baehr's method for organising the intellectual virtues is by way of their relevance to *inquiry*. Inquiry, the "active and intentional search for truth about some question" (*ibid.*: 18), is for Baehr the central activity of our epistemic lives. It is also one that presents us with a range of fairly generic challenges, of which Baehr identifies six. First, there is the challenge

[9] For a helpful discussion of vice within reliabilism, see Battaly (2014).

of *initial motivation*, of actually feeling inspired to undertake a search for truth. Second, there is the challenge of remaining *focussed* in inquiry, to a level that is in keeping with the intricacies of the inquiry at hand. Third, there is the need to be *consistent* in inquiry, to treat like sources alike and assess things on their merit. Fourth, and relatedly, we need to have *integrity* in inquiry, to avoid self-deception about what we are actually doing, post-hoc rationalisations of questionable conduct, or the selective application of attention. Fifth, some inquiries require that we are intellectually *flexible*, that we are capable of 'blue-sky thinking' and not simply stuck in a single way of doing things. And finally, some inquiries require an unusual amount of *endurance*, perhaps because of epistemic or non-epistemic pressures.

Baehr orders the intellectual virtues according to the type of challenge that they help us to overcome, and thus the role they play in facilitating good inquiry. We can do something similar with the vices, ordering them according to how they might cause our inquiries to stutter or fail when faced by one of these generic challenges. I set out this taxonomy below:

VICES OF INITIAL MOTIVATION: Incuriosity, cynicism, laziness, apathy.

VICES OF FOCUS: Negligence, thoughtlessness, inattention, distraction.

VICES OF CONSISTENCY: Closed-mindedness, partiality, bias, dogmatism.

VICES OF INTEGRITY: Arrogance, snobbery, mendacity, dishonesty.

VICES OF FLEXIBILITY: Lack of imagination or creativity, rigidity, stubbornness.

VICES OF ENDURANCE: Flakiness, intellectual cowardice, pessimism, impatience.

This list is illustrative, rather than exhaustive. For a start, I only include vices that are pre-theoretically familiar, although as I acknowledge below, one of the more interesting and important uses of vice epistemology is the identification of epistemically damaging traits that are not a part of the common lexicon. Furthermore, several of these vices probably fit into more than one category (cowardice can cause a lack of flexibility, for example), and in some cases the distinctions between vices are quite fine-grained. Although rough, this taxonomy should nevertheless be helpful in fixing the referent of the present discussion, and also gives some indication of the full breadth of intellectual vice.

Many of the historical figures noted in section 1 who were interested in the subject of intellectual character (with the notable exception of Aristotle) spent at least as much time exploring the intellectual vices as they did intellectual virtues; indeed, in her seminal treatment of intellectual virtue, Zagzebski suggests that mistakes in belief formation have historically been a much more popular topic of discussion than the strategies needed to circumvent them (1996: 171). Curiously, in contemporary virtue epistemology this situation has been reversed. Despite extensive discussion of the intellectual virtues over the previous three decades, sustained philosophical attention to the intellectual vices is a very recent

development[10]. In Chapter 2, I will address the question of why this has been the case. For now, I want to briefly sketch some reasons as to why the neglect of vice is an oversight worth addressing.

The first reason concerns the practical significance of the intellectual vices. Many of the vices listed above will be familiar from everyday life, as will the various harms they entail. Most straightforward, of course, are their attendant *epistemic* harms, with vices likely to obstruct the acquisition and dissemination of epistemic goods like truth, knowledge, and understanding, both for the vicious agent and for their community[11]. These epistemic harms will themselves often feed into a broader array of non-epistemic harms, when the obstruction of these epistemic goods leads people to be less informed than they could be. When it is people in positions of significant power that are exercising these vices, or if their possession is widespread within a population, then the consequences can be significant. To give just one example, which is borrowed from Ian Kidd (2016), it is common to blame epistemic vices like arrogance and dogmatism for the practice of climate change denial, an epistemic practice that could lead to untold other harms.

Invoking epistemic vices to account for epistemic and broader social harms in this way has its own pitfalls, however, which provides a second motivation to examine the intellectual vices. According to Kidd, if we are to 'charge' people, like climate change deniers, with epistemic vice then it is important that we understand these vices properly, and that we are able to explain what we mean when we say they are being arrogant or dogmatic. If we are not able to back up our accusations in this way, to "offer evidence, reasons, appeals, or examples to support the grumble" (*ibid.*: 183), then these accusations risk being mere rhetoric, a way of letting off steam more than anything else. The ability to make robust vice charges, therefore, depends on our having a robust vice epistemology. Kidd's claim here is a strong one, and we might not want to go quite so far as to claim that vice epistemology is necessary for our practices of vice charging to be well-grounded. Nonetheless, the general idea – that a good theoretical grasp of the intellectual vices can augment and strengthen our practices of vice charging – is an important one.

There is a third motivation that is closely connected to this. Whilst my illustrative list of vices gave some indication of the breadth of intellectually vicious character traits, it nonetheless stayed within the confines of the pre-theoretical. That is, it drew only on those vices that we would intuitively recognise. Some of the most interesting work in vice epistemology to date, however, has been the theorising and clarification of *less* familiar vices, things like testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007), epistemic self-indulgence (Battaly 2010), and epistemic malevolence (Baehr 2010). These are all examples of an important role for vice

[10] The key figures in this recent emergence of interest in intellectual vice are Cassam (2016), Battaly (2014, 2016), Kidd (2016), and Tanesini (2016). Some relatively early discussions of intellectual vice can be found in Swank (2000), Fricker (2007), Roberts and Wood (2007), Battaly (2010), and Baehr (2010).

[11] As we shall see in Chapter 3, a number of theorists think that the propensity to cause these epistemic harms is the defining feature of intellectual vice.

epistemology, which is to help ensure that we recognise vice wherever it is being displayed, rather than simply looking for it in the most obvious places. It can also help us draw fine-grained distinctions between specific vices, distinctions that can help us respond to similar traits in appropriately different ways.

The connection between vice and virtue provides another set of reasons, albeit derivative ones, for engaging in vice epistemology. In part, these reasons are theoretical. Whilst, as I shall argue in Chapter 2, we need to be careful in how close we draw the parallels between the two concepts, it seems possible that the study of vice might provide crucial insights into the nature and operation of virtue. Gabriele Taylor, in an ethical exploration of the 'deadly' vices, argues that focussing on vice is helpful since "it is possible to be much more precise about the nature of the damage inflicted on the agent by some specific vice… than to be about the possible benefit enjoyed by her through possession of a virtue" (2006: 3). The idea that humans 'flourish', or live a meaningful life, only if we possess certain virtues is a notoriously controversial one. The idea that certain vices, like indolence, lust, and gluttony, might *prevent* us from living a meaningful life, however, is comparatively palatable. Working back from the 'damage' wrought by these vices might therefore aid our positive theorising about virtue[12]. The same point applies for specific vices and virtues, too. In their detailed discussion of several intellectual virtues, for example, Robert Roberts and Jay Wood (2007) frequently choose to hone in on the nature of a given virtue by identifying first the vices to which it stands in opposition.

The connection between virtue and vice is not purely theoretical, of course. I have suggested that intellectual vices are not uncommon; indeed, in our most reflective moments we would probably all own up to a few of the vices from the taxonomy outlined above, at least within certain contexts. In order to cultivate virtue, it is therefore likely that we will need to be able to appreciate which are the vices that we have, and what are the best strategies for remedying them are. Vice epistemology will be particularly important to this end, since many intellectual vices are likely to be what Cassam (2015) calls 'stealthy' vices: they are traits that actively impede their own detection[13]. Being closed-minded, for example, will itself make it harder to appreciate one's own intellectual vices, including their closed-mindedness itself, since an appreciation of one's own failings requires just the attitude of critical openness that closed-mindedness inhibits. An understanding of how the intellectual vices operate, and how to recognise them if pure introspection is likely to be ineffective, will therefore be an important part in developing virtue.

[12] Taylor is just one example of a number of theorists who have argued that a focus on the negative can help illuminate the positive. Fricker (2007), for example, has focussed on the notion of injustice (specifically, epistemic injustice) in order to better understand justice, whilst Carel has argued that "illness is philosophically useful because of its acute disruption of the everyday; it makes visible the taken-for-granted manner in which we structure our routine life" (2014: 25).

[13] A discussion of self-concealing vices in a similar vein is offered by Medina (2013).

3 Thesis Overview

My main aim in this thesis is to provide a novel and explanatorily powerful account of the nature of intellectual vice. The key claim I will make is that there are, in fact, two distinct ways in which we can be intellectually vicious: we can either take bad epistemic ends, or we can have bad epistemic judgement. Making progress in this undertaking will itself require discussion of a range of ancillary issues, concerning virtue and its relation to vice, the difficulties faced by extant accounts of vice, and the nature of specific vices. I will now provide a brief overview of the arguments of this thesis, and explain how these various components all fit together.

I start, in Chapter 1, with a critical overview of the responsibilist conception of intellectual virtue. Although this thesis is focussed on the nature of intellectual vice, the vast majority of discussion within character-based epistemology to date has focussed on virtue. Familiarising ourselves with this discussion will serve two purposes. First, looking at the responsibilist notion of virtue can help us get a clearer idea of the distinctive *kind* of trait that virtue and vice epistemologists are interested in. I introduce this pre-theoretical picture as the *agential conception* of virtue and vice, and identify two core formal components: that virtues and vices are character traits; and that they are the appropriate target of certain paradigmatically agential reactive attitudes, most centrally praise and blame. Looking at how virtue epistemologists have modelled these agential virtues might then, in turn, give some indications as to how we might try to model agential vice. Again, I identify two core, but in this case substantive, features that responsibilist virtue epistemologists have focussed on: that virtues involve good motivations, and that they produce good effects. Although I am broadly sympathetic to this responsibilist picture of virtue, I make a number of critical innovations concerning the scope of character traits, the variety of appropriate reactive attitudes, and the nature of good motivations, many of which will prove significant when it comes to theorising intellectual vice.

Chapters 2 and 3 then consider extant analyses of intellectual vice. In Chapter 2, I introduce what has emerged as the orthodox view of vice within responsibilist virtue epistemology: that the intellectually vicious agent has bad *motivations*, in that they fail to be motivated by epistemic goods. I argue that the widespread support for this view, despite little by way of direct elaboration or defence, has its roots in a powerful assumption that has also stymied the discussion of intellectual vice more generally. I refer to this assumption as the *inversion thesis*: the claim that virtue and vice are structurally symmetrical, such that they are characterised by the same, if opposing, features. After providing an illustration of how this assumption operates within ethical theorising, I demonstrate how acceptance of the inversion thesis can also account for the popularity of the two forms of motivational approach. Although these do identify important ways of being intellectually vicious, I argue that they cannot account for the full array of vices; there are, in other words, plausible cases

where people are vicious despite the fact that they *are* motivated by epistemic goods. Not only does this undermine a popular orthodoxy about the nature of intellectual vice, it also serves as a cautionary note against uncritical reliance upon the inversion thesis more generally.

If the motivational approach is too narrow, one solution might be to focus not on psychological facts about the vicious agent but on the bad epistemic *consequences* of their character traits. Chapter 3 considers two consequentialist views of this form: Julia Driver's character consequentialism (2000), and Quassim Cassam's obstructivism (2016). I argue that both views face variants of the same two problems. The first concerns their ability to accommodate the full range of ways in which people can be intellectually vicious. Driver's view, in particular, struggles to make sense of a number of vices that are either not obviously epistemically harmful, or that are even epistemically helpful. Cassam does better on this score, but does so in a way that potentially opens up further complications for his account. The second difficulty is the more fundamental one, and is faced equally by both views. The reason why I discuss both Driver and Cassam's views, and not other forms of epistemic consequentialism, is that both theorists, at least at times, suggest an interest specifically in the agential conception of vice. In conceiving of vices as character traits or as qualities that are typically blameworthy, they both look to provide an account of a form of epistemic badness that is distinct from, say, the badness of having poor eyesight, or being bad at mental arithmetic. Their consequentialist analyses, however, are poorly equipped to accommodate this idea, and thus provide accounts that apply much more broadly than just to the agential vices.

In Chapter 4, I argue for a view of the nature of the agential vices that avoids the difficulties faced by both the motivational approach and by consequentialism. My view rests on the recognition of a hitherto unacknowledged form of viciousness: the viciousness of what I call *bad judgement*. Inspired by the role that *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, plays within Aristotelian virtue ethics, I argue that there is a form of viciousness that consists in an agent's having a certain problematic way of looking at the world, such that they are attuned to some set of epistemically inappropriate considerations. I begin the chapter by exploring how practical wisdom works within virtue ethics, before arguing that, despite its being comparatively neglected by virtue epistemologists, practical wisdom might have an important role to play in the epistemic domain, too. I then explain how certain deficiencies of practical wisdom, which I refer to as bad judgement, can lead us astray in our intellectual conduct even if we are fundamentally motivated by epistemic goods. I consider how it is that potentially well-intentioned agents can come to acquire bad judgement, and respond to two worries we might have about invoking the notion of practical wisdom in the context of virtue epistemology. I conclude with a summary of my bifurcated conception of intellectual vice, according to which agents are intellectually vicious either if they have bad ends, or if they have an engrained pattern of bad judgement.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed demonstration of how this bifurcated conception of vice works in practice, by considering the example of the vice of *intellectual snobbery*. Loosely

speaking, snobbery involves some disposition to make intellectual evaluations on the basis of intellectual status, rather than on intellectual merit, and to do so in a way that expresses some pre-occupation with your own superiority. After explaining what it is that makes this disposition, in some cases, a distinctly intellectual vice, I note that there are in fact two forms of pre-occupation with superiority that are identified as snobbish within the philosophical literature: some argue that snobs want to feel or appear superior to others, whilst others that they are already convinced of their own superiority. It is a testament to the explanatory power of my account that it can accommodate these two, mutually irreducible forms of snobbery. Thus, in keeping with my bifurcated account of vice, we have two forms of snobbery: a snobbery in ends, and a snobbery in sensibility. I finish with an extended discussion of this latter form of snobbery, which serves as a paradigmatic example of a vice of bad judgement.

1

Virtue: An Agential Conception

The main aim of this thesis is to provide an account of the nature of intellectual vice. Before turning to explore vice directly, however, it will be helpful to first offer a critical reconstruction of responsibilist thinking concerning the nature of intellectual *virtue*. This important foundational work will be the focus of this first chapter.

There are two reasons why it will be helpful to begin a thesis on intellectual vice with a chapter that explores intellectual virtue. First, it can help clarify the *formal* features of the kind of trait I am investigating. I have already noted, in my introduction to virtue epistemology, that I have a particular pre-theoretical conception of virtue and vice in mind. Drawing from the responsibilist strand of virtue epistemology[1], I am conceiving of virtues and vices as normatively thick qualities that make somebody a good or bad intellectual agent; for ease of reference, I will refer to this pre-theoretical picture as the *agential* conception of virtue and vice. I have also alluded to the paucity of discussion of the intellectual vices themselves, with the overwhelming focus in virtue epistemology being the analysis of the intellectual virtues. Consequently, it will be easier to add more detail to this pre-theoretical conception of virtue and vice if we consider first how these features manifest themselves in the context of discussion of virtue. Clarifying the agential conception of *virtue* should then

[1] I will normally use the term 'responsibilism', or cognates thereof, to denote a particular picture of virtue – namely, the picture of virtue presented in this chapter – although I will sometimes also use it to refer to accounts of vice developed or gestured at by theorists within this tradition. Generally speaking, I prefer the theoretically more neutral terms 'character-based virtue epistemology' or, simply, 'virtue epistemology' when referring to the general project of theorising intellectual character.

give us a firmer grip on the kind of trait that we should be looking to accommodate within a theory of the agential *vices*.

Second, considering the kind of trait that epistemologists identify as actually meeting this formal, pre-theoretical characterisation of virtue can provide some useful starting points for thinking about the actual *substantive* features of intellectual vice. This is not to say that I take virtue and vice to be structurally symmetrical. Whilst I have just suggested that I am interested in the same kind of trait in vice as responsibilist epistemologists are interested in for virtue – I am theorising the agential vices, as they have theorised the agential virtues – we should be open to the possibility that the actual features of the traits that meet this pre-theoretical characterisation might be different for vice than they are for virtue[2]. This disclaimer notwithstanding, the comparative lack of direct discussion of vice means that a sensible place to start when doing vice epistemology will be to look at the features that are conventionally identified as characteristic of virtue. Later chapters will then discuss whether we can construct a viable theory of vice from analogues of these substantive features of virtue.

I do not attempt to provide anything as precise as an account of intellectual virtue in this chapter. There are numerous such accounts in the literature, and given my main interest is in vice it will not be necessary to take a stance on the points of difference between them. Instead, I focus on four central features that characterise most accounts of intellectual virtue. The first two sections focus on the two key features of the agential conception of virtue: in Section 1, that virtues are aspects of our character; and in Section 2, that they attract some distinctly personal form of positive estimation. I then turn to consider two more substantive features of virtue, which are widely taken as constitutive of the traits that actually meet this pre-theoretical characterisation: in Section 3, that virtues require good epistemic motivations; and in Section 4, that virtues produce good epistemic effects. Since I am not attempting to provide an account of virtue I do not attempt to adjudicate disagreements about the exact interpretation of these four core features of virtue (or, in the case of the claim that virtues produce good consequences, whether it is really a feature of virtue at all). This is not, however, a purely descriptive exercise. At various points in this chapter I pass critical comment on, and suggest reinterpretations of, certain aspects of these four core features. In so doing I subtly reconfigure the conventional responsibilist conception of virtue, in ways that will become significant when I turn to the corresponding features of intellectual vice. I conclude this chapter, in Section 5, by reflecting upon the significance of this picture of virtue for the main task of this thesis, which will be to develop an account of the nature of intellectual vice.

[2] Indeed, I shall argue in Chapter 2 that relying too uncritically on a structural symmetry with virtue has caused problems for theorists who have looked to theorise the nature of intellectual vice.

1 Character Traits

In the Introduction to this thesis I observed that the conventional way of understanding the distinction between responsibilism and reliabilism is that, whilst for reliabilists the paradigm virtues are epistemic faculties like vision and memory, for responsibilists virtues are aspects of our intellectual *character*. Whilst I demurred from this orthodoxy, presenting the difference between responsibilism and reliabilism in terms of their different aims and influences, I nonetheless accept that the focus on character is arguably the defining feature of responsibilist virtue epistemology[3]. In this section I will first explain what it is responsibilists mean when they speak of virtues as aspects of our character, which is a core component of the agential conception of virtue (Section 1.1). I will then address a challenge to this orthodoxy that has emerged from social psychology (Section 1.2), before arguing that we should acknowledge that intellectual virtues can come in small (or, more accurately, 'local') packages (Section 1.3).

1.1 Agents and Character

The general idea that responsibilists are trying to capture when distinguishing between character traits and other types of trait is, I think, fairly intuitive. The qualities of open-mindedness or conscientiousness, which are both character traits, seem obviously and importantly different from qualities like having good eyesight, being skilled with a map and compass, or being 'naturally' intelligent, which are not. Similarly intuitive, perhaps, is the thought that the nature of the difference between these two types of quality is such that character traits represent a more appropriate focus for virtue epistemology. This, at least, is the case if one takes virtue epistemology to be analogous to a virtue theoretical approach to ethics, and thus understands the central task for virtue epistemologists to be developing a framework for assessing and evaluating intellectual agents. Discovering that someone is open-minded or conscientious seems to reflect upon them in a more significant way, to tell us more about the kind of intellectual agent they are, than discovering the extent of the aptitudes or skills they possess.

Such is the supposedly intuitive appeal of this picture, in fact, that the issue of what character traits actually *are* is rarely explored directly or in any real detail. This might not seem especially problematic if we stick to relatively clear examples of things that are or aren't character traits, like open-mindedness and good eyesight respectively. The waters, however, are considerably muddied if we turn our attention towards borderline cases. Does having a good attention span, say, count as an aspect of one's intellectual character, or being disposed

[3] Baehr, one of the key figures within virtue responsibilism, generally favours the label 'character-based virtue epistemology' as a name for the sub-field (see especially his 2011).

to wishful thinking[4]? Providing a comprehensive exposition of the nature of character traits and thus adjudicating such cases is beyond the scope of this thesis, although I will return to explore cases such as these in Chapter 3. For now, we can get a firmer grip on what sort of thing counts as a character trait by contrasting them with two alternatives: individual *acts*, and *sub-personal* qualities.

First, character traits are *dispositions* to act, think, and feel in specific ways. This can be contrasted with specific acts, single thoughts, or individual moments of feeling. The reason why responsibilists have focussed on dispositions rather than on individual acts is that they are, for the most part, interested in the analysis and evaluation of intellectual agents[5]. As Jason Baehr has put it, knowing that someone is virtuous in a particular respect tells us something about that person, "something about who this person is – about *the kind of person* he is" (2011: 117, emphasis added). A single act cannot tell us much about the kind of person somebody is, since a single act could be a one-off, or 'out of character'. This may not affect how we judge that act itself – if it was a good act, we might think, it was a good act[6] – but that the good act was a high point in an otherwise tawdry succession of life choices may well affect how we judge the agent. Even if we judge favourably a good *act* done by a bad person, that is, our judgement of the goodness of the act would not "carry over" to our assessment of the *person* on the basis of a one-off like this (Baehr 2011: 117 fn.7).

Since character traits (and, *a fortiori*, virtues) are supposed to tell us something about the agent who possesses those traits, they therefore cannot be mere one-off acts, or even repeat acts of the same sort. Rather, they must be habits of some form, entrenched dispositions that are embedded within the agent and predictive of their behaviour. As Gabriele Taylor puts it:

> To ascribe a character trait is to label and so to try and impose some order on a whole complex of behaviour and states of mind. We take ourselves to be isolating certain dominant tendencies to behave and dispositions to have certain thoughts and feelings which will help us explain particular actions and reactions and predict how she will behave and feel on other occasions. (Taylor 1996: 162)

This quotation from Taylor highlights a couple of important features of character traits that brings us to our second contrast. This is between character traits and sub-personal

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[4] Cassam (2016) has picked up on this worry in his work on vice epistemology, questioning Zagzebski's (1996) inclusion of wishful thinking on her list of vices since wishful thinking is not obviously thought of as a character trait. I suspect that similar concerns partly underpin his frustration with the lack of agreement on what traits actually count as vices, as well as his attempt to expand the scope of vice epistemology beyond our intellectual character (Cassam 2017). I will discuss this move, as well as the case of wishful thinking specifically, in Chapter 3.

[5] One exception to this is Sylvan (2017), who argues that virtue theoretic properties (like the property of being conscientious) are primarily act-attaching rather than agent-attaching.

[6] Montmarquet (1998) partly demurs from this view, claiming that whilst we judge good acts to be no better on account of being done by a good person, we do judge bad acts to be worse if they are done by a bad person. The reason we do so, however, is because continuing to act in problematic ways also requires a problematic indifference to or ignorance of one's past behaviour, and this adds to the badness of the act itself.

qualities, which include 'mere' *habits* (for example, the habit of regularly checking right and left before crossing a road), intellectual *skills* (an ability to use a map and compass, say), and *faculties* (like having good eyesight). As Taylor observes, character traits have a complexity that marks them out from such qualities. Whilst habits, skills, and faculties are all reliable and entrenched in a way that distinguishes them from individual acts, character traits marry a whole range of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dispositions. The possession of a character trait does not determine one's abilities, but it will determine, at least in part, how one will act, the patterns of thought one will engage in, the emotional responses one will have to certain situations, the kinds of factors that will motivate them, and so on. Second, as Taylor notes, a character trait will not only predict what it is one will do or how it is they will feel; it will *explain* their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Character can shed light on why someone acted in a certain way or had a given emotional response, in a way that the other types of quality mentioned above cannot. Of course, we do invoke skills and faculties in explanations. When asking why someone went conspicuously silent when it came to splitting the bill at the end of the evening, for example, we would be as likely to point to their inadequate numeracy as to their being insecure or intellectually lazy. However, what is distinctive about the latter, character-based explanations is that they explain *why* a poor grasp of numbers would lead them to opt out of discussions about how the bill should be apportioned. After all, if they were the sort of person who sought out challenges, or they were domineering, or dishonest, it might not have.

This combination of points – that character traits are a particularly rich and complex type of disposition, and one that explains thoughts, behaviour, and emotions – is what I intend to invoke when I speak of this conception of virtue as the *agential* conception of virtue[7]. They are traits that, to paraphrase Baehr, tell us something about the *kind of agent* somebody is: their values and commitments, the things they take to be significant or that strike them as reasons for action, and so on. They are thus traits that we "attribute to the person in a deep and important sense", and that are "closely associated with her very identity" (Zagzebski 1996: 85). We can again grasp the intuitive significance of such traits, as opposed to other types of quality, by reflecting on our response when someone's character changes. Imagine discovering that somebody who used to be a paragon of diligence and conscientiousness has, over the course of some period of estrangement, become lazy and sloppy in their intellectual endeavours, or that somebody who was previously revered for their creativity and innovation has become unimaginative and conformist. These are fundamental changes in that person's identity as an agent, ones that might be greeted with the rueful thought that 'it's like they're a completely different person'. Compare this with a change in sub-personal qualities, like somebody's 20:20 vision or navigational skills. Discovering that a long-lost friend's vision has deteriorated or that they have let their

[7] My description of virtues as agential qualities is similar, in certain respects, to the tendency to describe virtues as *personal* qualities. In the virtue epistemological literature this is most associated with Battaly (especially her 2016a), although this characterisation can be traced back to Zagzebski (1996).

familiarity with maps slip generally would not, in itself, leave you wondering who they had become.

1.2 Situationism and Virtue

Whilst the claim that virtues should be thought of as character traits remains near universally accepted within the responsibilist tradition, its viability has recently been subject to an acute and empirically grounded challenge. This challenge draws upon the 'situationist' social-psychological literature, which attempts to problematise the idea that how one acts from situation to situation is determined by general facts about the agent's character. Rather, situationists claim to show that much more significant in both predicting and explaining one's behaviour than one's internal character are seemingly trivial or otherwise irrelevant external facts about the situation. Studies have shown, for example, that people are much less likely to stop and help an incapacitated homeless person if they are running late for an appointment (Darley and Batson 1973), much more likely to help someone pick up a stack of papers if they themselves had just found a dime (Isen and Levin 1972), and so on. If external factors such as these play a greater role in explaining and predicting one's behaviour than internal factors about the kind of person they are, then we may well wonder why we should concern ourselves with their character traits; indeed, we may wonder whether it makes sense to talk about people as having character traits at all.

A number of theorists have interpreted these psychological results to present a serious, even existential, threat to virtue theoretical approaches to questions in philosophy. The first such critique focussed on virtue ethics. The basic thrust was that, insofar as virtue theories have as a success criterion some empirical adequacy – in other words, insofar as virtue theorists are interested in talking about traits that do actually exist, for creatures like us in the world we are in – the situationist account of human behaviour seems to suggest that it is a failure. As Gilbert Harman puts it, in the most strident articulation of this view, if the situationists are right "it may even be the case that there is no such thing as character" (2000: 165). The challenge to virtue ethics, the approach to ethics that focusses on good character, is that "if there is no such thing as character, then there is no such thing as character building" (*ibid*.: 177). John Doris (2002) draws a less extreme but similarly damaging conclusion: it is not that we have no character traits, but that our character traits are narrow or 'local' in scope, rather than broad or 'global'. That is, rather than talking about people as 'oblivious' or 'generous', we should instead talk about people as 'oblivious when in a rush' or 'generous when in a good mood'. Either way, virtue ethicists need to focus on ethical traits that are actually relevant to beings like us.

Recently, this challenge has been extended to character-based approaches to epistemology (Alfano 2012, 2013; Olin and Doris 2014). Some of the evidence that situationists have garnered seems to be relevant to one's intellectual, rather than ethical,

character. For example, the *Duncker candle task* purports to test creativity and mental flexibility by presenting people with a book of matches, a box of tacks, and a candle, and asking them to fix the candle to a vertical corkboard. In one study, two groups of people were presented with the challenge: a control; and a group whose mood had been artificially inflated through watching a short comedy, or eating a cookie. The study found that the control group hit upon the right solution (namely: remove the matches from the box, pin the box to the board, and place the candle on top) only 13% of the time, whilst those with the inflated mood were successful 75% of the time (Isen, Daubman, and Nowicki 1987). Similarly, the famous *Asch studies*, in which participants are presented with a series of lines and asked to judge which are equal in length, can also be interpreted as tests of intellectual traits, like conformity and intellectual courage. In a number of trials, Solomon Asch would have confederates state that an obviously incorrect pairing of lines were the same length, before asking the study participant to indicate their answer. Typically, around 75% of subjects gave the wrong answer, siding with the majority view over the apparent evidence of their own senses, at least once (Asch 1956). If virtue epistemologists are committed to the empirical adequacy of their views, these results might seem to pose a problem.

I cannot afford to give the situationist challenge to virtue theory the attention in response that it deserves. However, given the recent prominence it has enjoyed[8], it will be worth my making two points to justify my decision to nevertheless draw upon and contribute to a tradition that construes of virtues and vices as character traits. First, the situationist challenge is itself not uncontroversial. Even if we take as read the psychological evidence on which it is based, and it is beyond the scope of my expertise to question this, a number of virtue ethicists (Kamtekar 2004; Sabini and Silver 2005; Adams 2006; Sreenivasan 2008) and epistemologists (Baehr 2011, 2016; King 2014; Cassam 2016; Axtell 2017) have nevertheless disputed the claim that it is as troubling for their views as Harman, Doris, or Alfano have suggested. In particular, virtue theorists have claimed that philosophical situationists have been attacking a straw-man account of virtue, as a disposition to perform a specific type of action in all situations in which it might be relevant[9], and that even then the evidence does not merit the strength of conclusion drawn. For example, the studies introduced above are consistent with the claim that 13% of the population are intellectually flexible and creative, and 25% intellectually courageous. Those figures do not seem obviously problematic if we conceive of virtue, as many theorists do, as an attainable but rare ideal, a state for which we should be striving rather than a default that most people fall into.

The first point I wish to make, then, is simply that the situationist case against character-based virtue epistemology, is by no means cut and dried. The second is that the claim that it might undermine *vice* epistemology looks even weaker. The vast literature that philosophical situationists appeal to is one the generally serves to undermine the supposed

[8] In addition to the articulations noted above, see also the recent edited collection on *Epistemic Situationism* (Fairweather and Alfano 2017).

[9] In fairness, this is in turn a bit of a straw man representation of some of the recent, more sophisticated formulations of the situationist challenge, such as Alfano's (2013).

prevalence of traits that we might recognise as virtues: most people lack the global traits of creativity or kindness, they argue, or all too easily display conformity or self-absorption. One conclusion we might draw from these findings, however, is that the scarcity of virtue is evidence for the widespread possession of certain *vices*. Tom Bates and Pauline Kleingeld (2018), for example, have recently argued that the evidence put forward to support the situationist case that we lack general and consistent character traits could in fact be used to support the widespread possession of vices like egoism[10], a conclusion that Bates (2016) describes as character *pessimism* rather than character *scepticism*. This reading of the situationist findings is equally available to virtue epistemologists. Perhaps most people fail the Duncker candle test or would give the wrong answer in an Asch study not because they have no stable traits, but because most people are intellectually vicious; they are intellectually inflexible, or cowardly. As Olin and Doris put it in one of the first papers to consider the possibility of epistemic situationism, the situationist evidence suggests that "epistemic viciousness, rather than virtuousness, may best typify the human cognitive condition" (2013: 670)[11].

1.3 Global Versus Local Traits

The situationist challenge to virtue epistemology is not obviously a fatal objection to conceiving of intellectual virtues as character traits, and may even provide support for the existence of intellectual vices. What it does do, however, is draw attention to a more interesting issue: the distinction between so-called 'global' traits (as when we describe someone as open-minded *simpliciter*) and 'local' traits (as when we describe someone as open-minded in a particular domain or role).

This distinction touches upon one of the interesting differences between reliabilist and responsibilist accounts of epistemic virtue. Generally speaking, virtue reliabilists have been happy to talk about virtues in relatively local terms. John Greco (2010), for example, identifies virtues with a kind of ability, and notes that abilities are often indexed to particular environments and conditions. A good baseball player, for example, is someone who can more or less reliably hit home runs during baseball matches. That they would not be able to hit home runs in the middle of a warzone or if blindfolded does not detract from this ability. Similarly, that someone's vision might lead them astray in tricky light conditions or under the conniving attention of an evil demon needn't undermine the quality of their vision in situations where these factors do not come into play. Responsibilists, however, tend to talk about traits in more or less global terms. Their main interest has historically been in traits

[10] As they note, situationists do explore the cross-situational consistency of certain vices. For example, situationists interpret the notorious Milgram and Stanford Prison experiments as proof that most people will be sadistic or malicious in the right circumstances. Egoism, however, is a non-malicious moral vice, a category that Kleingeld and Bates claim situationists neglect. See also Kleingeld (2015).

[11] Relatedly, Cassam (2016) has suggested that there is psychological evidence that attests the empirical reality of the vices pertaining to conspiracy theorising.

that are "robustly held such that it resists undermining, and as one so settled or habitual that the agent will manifest it not just in a few situations that invite it, but in many" (Axtell 2010: 74). They are, in other words, interested in traits that manifest themselves in and are consistent across a wide range of domains and areas of one's life, and conceive of virtuous agents as those who are 'simply' curious, or 'simply' diligent.

I do not think we need to draw upon results from social-psychology to recognise that such people, who are virtuous across all domains of their lives, are extremely rare, if not unrecognisable. Long before the advent of modern psychological research, Locke rather bluntly remarked how "we see men frequently dextrous and sharp enough in making a bargain who, if you reason with them about matters of religion, appear perfectly stupid" (1706: §4). As Locke is attesting to here, much more common in our everyday lives than people who are virtuous *simpliciter* are people who are open-minded, inquisitive, and diligent when it comes to one area of their life (their work, or politics, or some pastime), and yet the opposite of these things in some other area.

This is clearly a related point to that which is made by philosophical situationists, but one that is importantly distinct. Many of the situationist experiments appear to demonstrate an inconsistency in behaviour that directly undermines the possibility that the agent in question has a given virtue. It is straightforwardly contrary to intellectual courage, for example, if someone is swayed by the opinions of seemingly friendly others, or to mental flexibility if they can only be flexible when they are a good mood. I am interested in variability across the different domains and roles that make up our lives, and the fact that people often seem to meet all the criteria for a given virtue within a given domain but not in another. Again, the recognition of this fact does not in itself pose a direct challenge to responsibilism. Full virtue is an attainable but demanding ideal, and such localised traits could be dismissed as either stepping stones on the way to virtue proper, or else as clusters of discrete acts of virtue[12]. However, perhaps we want to make a stronger claim here: that local traits of this form are *themselves* virtues. That is, someone's open-mindedness when it comes to politics, or diligence when it comes to keeping track of their financial affairs, might themselves count as virtues, even if these traits do not extend beyond these domains.

I see no reason why virtue epistemologists should be resistant to this possibility. Certainly, traits of this form appear to meet all the conditions for virtue. For a start, open-mindedness about politics can surely resemble the kinds of complex and deeply-embedded personal qualities that serve as character traits on the account just sketched. Of course, it is not a *global* trait, but it would be an extreme move to claim that only global traits count as character traits. Coupled with the above observation that true global traits are exceedingly rare, this would be tantamount to claiming that most people do not have any character traits.

[12] By 'act of a virtue' here I am referring to individual acts that meet all the conditions for virtue, but that do not arise from a virtuous character trait. If a character trait is virtuous just if it aims at and reliably achieves some set of good ends, for example, then an act of virtue would be a single act that aims at and achieves these good ends. For more on this use, see Zagzebski (1996).

This is a claim that not even situationists, with the possible exception of Harman, want to make. A more natural and palatable claim, instead, is to observe that our characters are simply inconsistent across domains. Furthermore, local traits can embody all the other features I will shortly identify as part of the orthodox picture of virtue. Someone's open-mindedness about politics can arise from a genuine *motivation* to discover important truths, even if this motivation does not extend to other domains, and their open-mindedness can also contribute to *success* in discovering these truths.

Most problematic, arguably, is the possibility that local traits will *reflect positively* on their bearer in the way that is characteristic of virtue. After all, if we had previously assumed that someone's enlightened approach to politics extended to all areas of their life, only to discover that they are completely set in their ways when it comes to their views on which kind of books are worth reading, we would surely downgrade our estimation of their character. However, it is important to distinguish here between estimation of aspects of one's character, and estimations of one's character as a whole. This revelation may well result in us thinking less of this person's character *as a whole*, since before we had assumed that they were open-minded across all domains and not just the one. Nonetheless, I do not think it would, or should, affect how we judge the specific *aspect* of their character that initially made us think positively of them. They are still open-minded about politics, after all, and this still seems like a commendable trait.

Perhaps what the revelation about the locality of their open-mindedness really does is raise the suspicion that their open-mindedness is not genuine; that they have been putting on a front in the political domain, and that now the mask has slipped. However, the motivational requirements on virtue (which I will turn to shortly) mean that if they are not genuine then they are not virtuous anyway. Alternatively, we may accuse them of hypocrisy, although the legitimacy of this charge will depend on how we define hypocrisy. If it is simply maintaining standards in one area that one does not ascribe to in another then they will be hypocritical, but it also does not seem a particularly egregious failing. If it is a failure to practice what you preach, and they do preach open-mindedness, then they will be hypocritical. Once more, however, this does not provide us with a reason to think less of the good part of their character, their open-mindedness when it comes to politics. Rather, it merely re-describes the criticism we have of their character as a whole.

When it comes to character, Robert Merrihew Adams has argued, "excellence can come in small packages" (2006: 130)[13]. There may be a limit to how narrow a trait can be before it stops counting as an excellent, although it is important to bear in mind that, to exemplify a virtue within a given domain or role, one has to actually meet all the requirements of that virtue. This will itself place certain limits on how narrow a virtue can go (or, at least, the kinds of narrowness that are permissible): someone who is 'open-minded'

[13] Adams has argued for similar claims as those in which I present in this sub-section, (2006: 115-143), although whilst he seems to oscillate between the weaker claim that 'modules' of virtue of this form are parts of virtue and the stronger claim that they themselves are virtues, I unequivocally endorse the latter.

when it comes to arguments made by Labour party politicians, or on Thursdays, or when in a good mood, does not count as virtuous, but this is not because their open-mindedness is not sufficiently global. Rather, it is because part of what it means to open-minded is to take seriously a range of contrasting viewpoints *vis-à-vis* some issue and to do so reliably, across a more or less extended period of time, and whenever it is appropriate. Finally, nothing I have said is inconsistent with the claim that some virtues are more excellent than others, either because they are broader or because they concern some more significant domain. Nor does it prevent me from acknowledging the importance of aiming for virtue in all domains of one's life, and recognising the unique good of having a unified and consistently good character. Nonetheless, and whilst for simplicity's sake I will often refer to virtues and vices in their global forms, it is helpful to remember that virtues, like traits generally, exist on a narrow-broad spectrum.

2 Positive Estimation

"The first thing that can be said about a virtue", remarks Linda Zagzebski, at the outset of her classic discussion of intellectual virtue, "is that it is an excellence" (1996: 84). Although the first thing I said about intellectual virtue was that they are aspects of our character, since this is the central feature of the strand of virtue epistemology on which I am focussing, I nevertheless agree with Zagzebski's general point here. It is central to *any* conception of virtue that virtues are an excellence of some form. What is distinctive about the agential conception of virtue is the specific kind of excellence it invokes. This is the next feature of virtue within the responsibilist tradition that I shall develop. In Section 2.1 I will introduce this distinctive form of agential excellence, observing the close connection it has to the praiseworthiness of virtue. I will then, in Section 2.2, argue that it is important to acknowledge that virtues elicit a broader range of reactive attitudes than just praise, a point that can help circumvent worries about virtue and non-voluntarism.

2.1 Praise

A central component of my discussion in Section 1, where I explained what it means to describe virtues as aspects of our character, was the claim that virtues 'reflect upon' their bearer in some way. Virtues, I noted, tell us things about the type of agent somebody is. More than this, we can now observe that virtues tell us something *excellent* about the kind of agent someone is. Virtue, in other words, is a distinctly agential excellence.

When someone's acts manifest a virtue we admire them not only for any positive effects they might have, but also because of what it reveals about them as a person. This is a

form of admiration that focusses on who they *are*, not (merely) what they can *do*. This is importantly different from the type of admiration we might have for some skill of theirs, or the quality of their faculties. Again, whilst the details of this distinction might be tricky to pin down, I take it that the distinction itself is an intuitive one. Someone who is open-minded, inquisitive, intellectually courageous, and diligent would attract our respect and admiration even if, through some cruel twist of fate, their intellectual faculties were inadequate and they had no real cognitive skills. The latter would not affect our judgement of them as a good person, in some intellectually-valenced way. The same is not the case of someone who is dogmatic, intellectually lazy, sloppy, and a conformist, even if they nonetheless had a range of keen faculties and capacities. Whilst we may well still respect the quality of their faculties, we would not think very much of *them*; indeed, we would perhaps resent them even more for the fact that their deficiencies of character cause them to spurn their intellectual gifts.

Very often, the theoretical recognition of the distinctly agential excellence of virtue manifests itself in the claim that virtues are the appropriate object of certain deeply personal reactive attitudes. In keeping with the Aristotelian roots of much contemporary virtue ethics, this is most often spelled out in terms of the claim that virtues are *praiseworthy*. Aristotle himself famously tied virtue and vice closely to praise and blame, arguing that "we are praised and blamed on the basis of our virtues and vices" (*NE* II.5.1106a)[14], and the corresponding claim that we are praiseworthy for our intellectual virtues has become one of the central tenets of responsibilist virtue epistemology. More controversial is the question of precisely why virtues are praiseworthy in this way[15]. Some virtue epistemologists argue, with Aristotle, that people are praiseworthy for the *possession* of virtue. Zagzebski, for whom making sense of praise is a central part of any adequate theory of virtue[16], is the most prominent advocate of this position. She argues that the notion of praise for virtue is inextricably linked to the responsibility we have for the development of virtue:

> The particular kind of praiseworthiness that applies to virtue, then, reflects the fact that the virtuous person might have been vicious instead. It is the fact that the person could have gone either way that distinguishes virtue from certain other excellences. (Zagzebski 1996: 105)

Virtues, for Zagzebski, are by definition traits that we actively acquire, rather than traits that we involuntarily develop. Developing virtues requires that we put in the appropriate "moral work" (*ibid.*: 125). The praiseworthiness of virtue reflects this fact, and the fact that had someone not put in that work they would have turned out vicious instead. Accordingly, it is the basic fact that somebody *is* virtuous that we praise them for.

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[14] References to the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) are to the translation by Crisp (2000).
[15] For a detailed overview of this debate, see Battaly (2016a).
[16] "That virtues are excellences that are both praiseworthy in their possessors and beneficial to others is an aspect of the idea of virtue that ought to count as a constraint on any acceptable account." (Zagzebski 1996: 101).

Not all virtue epistemologists agree with Zagzebski on this score. James Montmarquet (1993), for example, has questioned the claim that we are responsible for our virtues, and thus deserve praise for their possession. He claims that it is a 'truism' that we do not have direct responsibility for, and cannot directly control, the development of our character traits, including our virtues and vices (*ibid.*: 15)[17]. Our character begins to develop at an age before we have any say in the process, and remains heavily influenced both by this initial development and by our environment as we grow and mature. Nonetheless, making sense of praise and blame is a central part of Montmarquet's account; indeed, his interest in virtue epistemology stems from an aspiration to ground responsibility for our beliefs, and thereby ground responsibility for our acts, in our intellectual virtues and vices. To do this, however, Montmarquet focusses not on responsibility for traits, but what he takes to be the more plausible notion of responsibility for acts. He argues that even if we cannot be held responsible for the content of our character, we can still be held responsible for *trying* to exemplify a particular character trait, for *allowing* oneself to exemplify a trait, or for *trying* to accomplish some end that is related to a particular trait. Whilst our virtues are thus not themselves are praiseworthy, the *exercise* of these virtues is.

2.2 Other Reactive Attitudes

This controversy, between those who think we are praiseworthy for the possession of our virtues and those who think we are praiseworthy for their exercise, has its roots in the contested nature of praise and (in particular) blame more generally. In recent years, the question of when we are to be praised or blamed for something has become closely tied to questions about free will and desert. There is a venerable tradition in ethics which maintains that we are only responsible for, and thus can only be praised or blamed for, that which is under our control in some more or less direct way[18]. That is, we do not blame someone if they did some misdeed but, perhaps because they were acting under conditions of serious coercion or because they had been hypnotised, they could not really help doing it. This, supposedly, is because we acknowledge that this person had no say in their acting wrongly, or else because they were not the appropriate 'source' of their actions; really, it is the person that made them do these things that is responsible. If this is the case, however, and if

[17] It is perhaps worth noting that the 'responsibility' from which responsibilism derives its name is not responsibility in the sense of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness, but responsibility in the sense of being a responsible inquirer. Its roots are in the work of Code (1984, 1987), who makes epistemic responsibility the central epistemic virtue.

[18] This idea, too, can be traced back to Aristotle: "Since virtue is to do with feelings and actions, and since voluntary feelings and actions are praised and blamed, while the involuntary ones are pardoned and occasionally even pitied, presumably anyone considering virtue must determine the limits of the voluntary and the involuntary" (*NE* III.1.1109b).

determinist arguments that much of what we do is not under our direct control also hold, then the scope of our responsibility is in fact much narrower than we often presume[19].

As we have seen, a version of this dialectic is reflected in the responsibilist literature on praise for virtue. On the one hand, Zagzebski attempts to ground the praiseworthiness of virtue, at least in part, in the claim that one could have been otherwise. On the other, Montmarquet's contention that we are *not* praiseworthy for possession of our virtues but for the acts we perform that manifest them takes as its starting point the idea that we do not, in fact, have direct control over the development of our character. I do not wish to wade into this debate, although I can see the appeal of Montmarquet's move. If someone was born into a life replete with privilege, good opportunities, and caring parents or other mentors it seems odd to praise *them* for the host of intellectual virtues that they develop as a consequence, even whilst we may still think they are due some degree of praise for the various good acts they perform that manifest these virtues (see also Battaly 2016b). However, the point I wish to make at this stage is that even if our account of praise is not compatible with praise for one's virtues in all or most cases, this does not mean we should back away from the idea that virtues are a distinctly agential form of excellence.

It is interesting to observe, in this connection, that the notions of praise and praiseworthiness are almost entirely absent from Baehr's theory of virtue. Baehr's work arguably focusses on the distinctly agential, or (to use his terminology) distinctly 'personal', kind of excellence that is characteristic of responsibilist virtue more than any other theorist's, actually defining intellectual virtues as character traits that contribute to their possessor's "personal intellectual worth" (2011: 102). Personal worth generally, for Baehr, is the distinctive kind of goodness that is picked out when we describe someone as a good *person*. Although the most obvious implications of such a description are moral ones, Baehr also suggests there is an intellectual dimension to personal worth. Sometimes we admire people in ways that are both personal and intellectual, as when we come across someone with a "deep and abiding desire for knowledge and understanding… and who, as a result of this desire, is regularly willing to give a fair and honest hearing to 'the other side,' to persevere in his search for the truth", and so on (*ibid.*: 93). It is the qualities that are constitutive of personal intellectual worth in this way that Baehr identifies as virtues. Despite this heavy emphasis on the personal excellence of virtue, there is nonetheless only one occasion during the development of this account where Baehr expresses our reaction to such people as one of praise (*ibid.*: 92). Much more commonly invoked are attitudes like admiration.

Whether or not Baehr intentionally steers clear of drawing a close association between virtue and praise, I think he is right to pick up on the fact that the recognition of facts about someone's character elicit a wider range of reactive attitudes than the usual focus on praise and blame would suggest. There are, for example, at least some cases where esteem

[19] A seminal articulation of this case is Pereboom (2014). Pereboom, like several other theorists who accept broadly determinist arguments, attempts to develop a picture of responsibility that is not reliant upon free will or control.

and disesteem (Haybron 1999) or admiration and pity (Crisp 2010) are as appropriate a response to virtue and vice as praise and blame[20]. Given that such attitudes are less intuitively tied to facts about the voluntary origin of these traits, affording them equal billing to praise and blame may well placate theorists who are concerned about the implications of non-voluntarism for conventional virtue epistemological theorising (for example, Battaly 2016a), Similarly, it might prove helpful for those who worry about the moralistic tone of the language of praise and blame (Cassam: 2016).

3 Motivations

In the first two sections of this chapter, I have developed a largely pre-theoretical picture of the kind of trait in which virtue epistemologists are interested. I have referred to this picture as the agential conception of virtue, and noted that it construes intellectual virtues as aspects of our character, and ones that reflect positively upon us in some distinctly personal or agential way. In the remaining two sections, I will turn to the substantive features of the traits that virtue epistemologists argue actually instantiate this conception. In Section 4, I will explore the disputed claim that there is a success condition on virtue, such that virtues reliably bring about good epistemic effects. First, I will focus on the much less contentious claim that virtues require good intellectual motivations. I will start by outlining the standard view of what these good motivations consist in (Section 3.1), before departing from this view on two issues: the relation between the two components of virtuous motivation (Section 3.2) and the question of whether the virtuous agent must care about epistemic goods for their own sake (Section 3.3).

3.1 Virtuous Motivation

The idea that virtue requires a certain motivational orientation is now an established responsibilist orthodoxy, and is frequently cited as one of the defining features of the responsibilist conception of virtue (Battaly 2016a, 2017a)[21]. What's more, there is broad agreement amongst prominent theorists concerning the shape of this motivational picture, with most responsibilists endorsing a particular two-tiered structure of virtuous motivation[22].

[20] In the context not of virtue but of epistemic badness, Fricker (2016) has argued for a conception of 'epistemic agent-regret', a first personal response to non-culpable wrong-doing that mirrors Williams' (1982) famous discussion of agent-regret in the context of bad moral luck.

[21] This sub-section develops material first published in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* as 'Motivational Approaches to Intellectual Vice' (Crerar Forth.).

[22] This picture has been articulated more or less explicitly by Montmarquet (1993, 2000), Zagzebski (1996), and Baehr (2011, 2013).

Elucidating this conventional understanding of virtuous motivation is the aim of the first sub-section.

First, it will be helpful to distinguish, with Zagzebski, between 'motives' and 'ends'. An agent's end picks out some particular goal they have, a "state of affairs the agent tries to bring about through her act". Their motive, meanwhile, refers to the force of being moved by that end, the "psychic state in the agent that causes her to act and which can explain or make intelligible the acts it motivates" (2003: 146). Any given virtue is, in part, a disposition to take a particular set of states of affairs as your ends: the open-minded person will want to have considered a range of viewpoints fairly and equitably, the diligent person will want to ensure they have double-checked every significant piece of evidence on which they rely, and so on. We can refer to these as the *proximate* ends of that virtue. These are the objects of the *proximate motivations* of a given virtue, which manifest themselves in the agent's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. So, for example, the diligent agent will be motivated to reconfirm the relevance of a particular lead, will think about ways to do so, and will feel uneasy if they are unable to[23].

Being motivated by these proximate ends does not itself make you virtuous, however. Rather, the virtuous agent is one whose disposition to take these proximate ends, which may be disparate and varied, is grounded in a more fundamental and unifying concern for epistemic goods, like truth, knowledge, and understanding. These, we can refer to as the *ultimate* ends of epistemic virtue. So, the virtuously diligent person is one who wants to check and recheck their evidence, and wants to do so *because* they care about epistemic goods. Generally speaking, virtue epistemologists are open to there being a diversity of different epistemic goods. Whilst truth and knowledge are perhaps the most obvious, we might also consider the significance of additional cognitive states, such as understanding (Riggs 2003; Roberts and Wood 2007; Kvanvig 2009) or what Robert C. Roberts and Jay Wood refer to as 'acquaintance': "the kind of cognitive advantage that we ascribe to someone by saying that she has had 'a lot of experience' – with, say, deep-sea fishing or the financial markets" (2007: 51)[24]. Similarly, if perhaps more nebulously, the virtuous agent will likely also care about values such as 'significance' or 'interestingness', either as a qualifier on other goods or as a good in their own right. Finally, they will also care about the epistemic goods available to others[25]. This will often be fairly direct, in the manner of a teacher who tries to foster epistemic goods in others and help them reach their epistemic potential. It can also be indirect, as in the case of a researcher who cares about the wealth and diversity of epistemic

[23] As this perhaps suggests, 'motivation' should be understood fairly loosely here. Baehr (2011) arguably captures the idea better, describing the virtuous agent more loosely as being 'positively oriented' towards certain ends, with this positive orientation grounding various motivational and other responses. I will continue to use the term motivation in this broad way, however, in part because it is less clumsy than 'positive orientations', and also because it is in keeping with the current literature on these issues.

[24] Roberts and Wood are keen to stress that acquaintance is a distinct epistemic good and not merely a justifier in propositional knowledge.

[25] Kawall (2002) provides detailed discussion of the 'other-regarding epistemic virtues', such as honesty and integrity.

goods available to society generally and who therefore plugs away at a problem, well aware that it might not be solved until long after their time.

Both proximate and ultimate motivations have an important function within the responsibilist motivational story. Proximate motivations allow us to individuate the virtues (hence, there is not just the single virtue of being oriented towards the epistemic good), and they serve to connect an agent's ultimate ends with actions in the world. However, it is the second aspect of virtuous motivation – the ultimate concern for epistemic goods that grounds these proximate ends – that, crucially, provides the distinctive agential value with which responsibilists are concerned. Proximate motivations cannot account for this; after all, one can have the proximate ends of a particular virtue and not be a personally excellent agent, as in the case of someone who acts in open-minded ways purely to appear enlightened before their colleagues. Having an appropriate orientation towards epistemic goods, on the other hand, grounds the value of virtue in something good about the agent[26]. Consequently, when I speak of virtues as involving good motivations, or refer to the responsibilist conception of virtuous motivation, it will generally be to the idea that virtues require some kind of positive orientation towards epistemic goods that I am referring[27].

3.2 Connecting Proximate and Ultimate Motives

The picture I have just sketched, in which the virtuous agent is one who has a specific set of proximate motives that is grounded in an ultimate concern for epistemic goods, is one that is widely accepted by responsibilists. The role for each level of motivation is clear: our ultimate motivations ground the value of the virtues, whereas their proximate motivations connect these foundational motives to the world and allow us to individuate the virtues. What is generally left more obscure is the precise nature of the relation that exists between these two levels of motivation. What, exactly, does it mean to say that one's proximate motivations are 'grounded in' their ultimate ones?

Baehr is the only theorist to explore this grounding relation in any great detail. Specifically, he advocates a cognitive understanding of the relation, whereby the virtuous agent has to *believe* that the two levels of motivation are related in some appropriate way. He sets his account out as follows:

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[26] There is some dispute about how, precisely, virtuous motivations play this value conferring role. Baehr (2011) argues that the goodness of these motivations is derived from the goodness of the ends at which they aim: it is intrinsically epistemically good to be motivated by intrinsic epistemic goods (similarly, see Hurka 2001). Zagzebski (2003), slightly obscurely, disagrees with this picture. She thinks that the motivation for epistemic goods is itself an intrinsic good, quite apart from the goods at which it aims.

[27] One possible exception to this tendency of affording a central role to the concern for epistemic goods can be found in Roberts and Wood (2007). They deny that all intellectual virtues have their own distinctive, and distinctively intellectual, motivations (*ibid.*: 72), and identify love of knowledge as a discrete virtue (*ibid.*: 153-182). It is, however, a virtue that features in all other intellectual virtues (*ibid.*: 305).

> A person S's disposition to engage in virtue-relevant activity A is an intellectual virtue only if (a) S reasonably believes that A is suitably related to S's more general epistemic goals, and (b) this belief partially explains S's disposition to engage in A. (Baehr 2013: 114)

To recast this point in the terminology that I have just introduced, Baehr's claim is that for somebody's disposition to be motivated by a set of proximate ends to count as virtuous, their motivation must (at least partly) follow from the reasonable belief that these ends are suitably related to their virtuous ultimate ends. The most obvious candidate for a suitable relation, Baehr notes, is instrumentality, such that the virtuous agent is motivated to seek out a range of viewpoints or double check their evidence because they believe that doing so will be conducive to the acquisition of epistemic goods. There are other possibilities, however; certain proximate ends might themselves be constitutive of their ultimate ends, for example.

By grounding the connection between the virtuous agent's mediate and proximate motives in a belief, Baehr incorporates an element of intellectualism into his view. That is, his view requires that the virtuous agent is aware of each component of their motivational structure, and actually forms beliefs about how they relate to each other. Baehr is alive to concerns about the potential demandingness of this move, and makes a number of concessions to offset any worries that this might generate. In particular, he points out that the requirement that agents believe there to be an appropriate connection between their different levels of motivations does not entail they must have this belief present in their mind as they act, or indeed at any other point. Furthermore, it does not require that they have consciously deliberated about the possibility of the connection. All that matters, Baehr argues, is that they believe in this "enough or in the way necessary" to explain their disposition to engage in particular patterns of virtuous thought, feeling, and action (*ibid.*: 102).

Despite these qualifications, I still believe the intellectualism inherent in Baehr's account leaves us unable to capture some plausible cases of intellectual virtue. Consider the following two examples:

> GOLDIE: "Suppose Goldie has reached the sceptical conclusion that there is no telling what is and is not truth-conducive. Not being one to pursue that for which (she thinks) she can only hope, she does not endeavour to identify and follow truth-conducive paths. But even so, she has all the virtues we observed in [a paragon of virtue]." (Swank 2000: 199-200)

> HAROLD: Harold was raised in a cult-like society in which the only received intellectual value was the extent to which one could memorise and appreciate the writings within one central text. Following a chance encounter, however, he strikes up an unlikely friendship with an outsider, who lends him a copy of Plato's *Republic*. Against his own better judgement, and believing himself to be erring as he does so, he goes ahead and starts to read.

Neither Goldie nor Harold's behaviour is guided by a reasonable belief that ties it into some virtuous set of ultimate ends. Although Goldie acts in ways that evidently seem virtuous, she does not do so because she thinks they will lead her to truth; after all, she thinks truth is out of reach[28]. Harold, meanwhile, actually believes that his acts are not tied in with his ultimate ends, which at this point are to achieve mastery of his society's central text. He is what Nomy Arpaly and Timothy Schroeder (1999) refer to as an 'inverse akratic': he does the right thing but does so against his own better judgement, believing (at this stage at least) that his acting in this way is wrong. Accordingly, both agents fall foul of Baehr's 'connecting belief requirement', and neither should count as virtuous. This seems like the wrong result. Casey Swank introduces Goldie primarily to demonstrate that a failure to aim at truth need not make you vicious, but as the quotation above demonstrates he clearly also endorses the stronger claim: that Goldie is in fact virtuous. Whilst it would be a stretch to suggest the same is true of Harold – after all, his is one good act in a sea of more problematic ones – it certainly seems that his is at least a step towards virtue. Even if his *traits* are not stable or robust enough to count as virtues, in other words, it certainly seems like he is undertaking an *act* of virtue.

Although I do not have space to fully develop it here, I would like to briefly explore a less intellectualist way of understanding the requisite relation between the two levels of the virtuous agent's motivational structure; and, indeed, of understanding the motives themselves. This account runs parallel to Arpaly's (2003) work in moral psychology, which is presented primarily as a response to cases like the inverse akratic. According to Arpaly, what matters in determining somebody's moral worth is not what they believe about their actions; that is, it does not matter whether they believe a given course of action to be the right thing to do, or understand why it is. Rather, what matters is that the agent is responsive to the reasons that make that act in fact the right thing to do, even if they did not recognise them as such. What matters, in other words, is that the agent acts on account of the right-making features of that action, whether or not they actually believed that these features make it right.

A helpful way of clarifying what this account means, and how it might work in the intellectual domain, will be to return to look at Goldie, whose motivational structure as presented by Swank is somewhat mysterious. How is it that someone who has come to the conclusion that there is no use in ever aiming for truth, since truth is out of her reach, nonetheless systematically mimics the dispositions of a someone who *is* guided by truth? It is hard enough to imagine that she should do so with the traits Swank discusses, which includes virtues like open-mindedness, appreciation of one's own fallibility, and tolerance of uncertainty, since these traits manifest themselves in all sorts of different ways across a variety of different contexts. It seems even odder once we factor in virtues like courage, diligence, patience, and honesty, all of which require the expenditure of a great degree of effort or the willingness to potentially incur significant personal costs in the pursuit of some good. How

[28] I will return to the puzzle of why Goldie does act in these ways shortly.

can we explain these dispositions in someone who thinks the pursuit of truth is futile, and who thus would not have this goal to sustain and motivate them?

Something needs to account for Goldie's motivational structure being identical (or near enough) to that of the virtuous agent. There are a variety of more or less farfetched possibilities that could serve this purpose, ranging from hypnosis to an extensive self-aggrandising desire to simply *appear* virtuous on account of the esteem that would bring[29]. However, the most psychologically plausible is that Goldie is, after all, motivated by the same things as the virtuous agent – namely, that a given course of action is truth-conducive – but that she *does not think of it as such*. In other words, Goldie's problem is that she simply has an overly demanding conception of truth and truth-conduciveness; say, one that understands a true belief to be one that could not possibly be wrong, and a path of inquiry to be truth-conducive only if it will certainly lead to infallible knowledge. This, naturally, leads her to believe that both truth and truth-conducive paths of inquiry are out of her reach. Nonetheless, far from passively drifting in the way Swank suggests, Goldie guides her inquiries on the basis of (what she takes to be) a separate value: the quality of a belief's being 'good enough'. Sure, she concedes, this is not as valuable a state as truth, but in our non-ideal world it is the best of a bad bunch. Thus, the reason Goldie patiently pores over data, considers lots of alternative explanations, and suspends belief until she has plentiful evidence, all in an apparent display of virtue, is not because these she thinks that doing so will be truth-conducive – she does not, because of her demanding conception of what truth-conduciveness entails – but because she thinks that doing so will be conducive to beliefs that are good enough.

Of course, Goldie is wrong about this. The strategies she identifies *are* truth-conducive, and she identifies them over other strategies on account of the features that in fact make them truth-conducive. She simply does not realise this, because she mistakenly identifies the truth-conducive as the good enough-conducive. However, whilst this might make her a bad *epistemologist*, I would resist the claim that it makes her a bad epistemic agent. After all, she is someone who is reliably attuned to the features that make something the right thing to do, epistemically speaking, and who consistently acts on the basis of those features. That she uses the wrong words to describe those features – as Arpaly might put it, that she is a poor abstract thinker – does not seem all that relevant to the assessment of many aspects of her intellectual character[30]. If I am right about this, then I would suggest that what

[29] I will argue in Chapter 4 that it is, in fact, unlikely that someone who lacked the virtuous agent's ends could systematically act in the same way as they do. This is because they won't have been shaped by their experiences in the same way.

[30] In presenting his own view, Baehr (2013) argues against the brand of anti-intellectualism presented by Arpaly. However, his argument equivocates between the right-making features of a particular course of action (i.e. the considerations that make a course of action the right thing to do), and what we can describe as the action that ends up being the right one (i.e. the course of action that would in fact produce the best consequences). These two can come apart: staying up all night poring over some data may be the right thing to do based on the information available to you at the time, even if it turns out that there are no new insights to be had. Arpaly's claim is that we should be motivated by an action's right-making features, not that we should be motivated by the action that will turn out best.

matters is not that the agent believes her proximate ends tie in with her ultimate ones, but rather simply that she is motivated by these proximate ends *because* they tie in with suitable ultimate ones. Often agents will have beliefs to this effect. However, as Goldie illustrates, this will not always be the case.

3.3 The Truth for its Own Sake

There is one further aspect of this responsibilist motivational orthodoxy from which I would like to partially demur, and this is the role that the virtuous agent's motivation for epistemic goods should play within their overall motivational structure. I have been referring to epistemic goods like truth and understanding as the 'ultimate' ends in the virtuous agent's motivational structure, and generally virtue epistemologists understand them to be just that: the ultimate, or final, concern for the virtuous agent. In other words, the virtuous agent is one who cares about epistemic goods at least partially for their own sake, and not merely because they are conducive to some further, non-epistemic concern (e.g. Roberts and Wood 2007: 172-177; Baehr 2011: 99)[31].

It is easy to see why responsibilists make this move. For a start, it is this concern for truth and other epistemic goods that grounds the distinctive kind of value that virtues attract. Furthermore, it serves to preclude unpalatable examples of the following form from counting as virtuous:

> WATSON AND CRICK: James Watson and Francis Crick undertook pioneering research into the structure of the DNA molecule. It has subsequently emerged that a significant part of their motivation for doing so was the pursuit of the various extrinsic goods that they would accrue as a consequence, perhaps most significantly a Nobel Prize (c.f. Roberts and Wood 2007: 294-295).

> THE BRAIN: One part of cartoon duo 'Pinky and the Brain', Brain is a mouse hell-bent on world domination. He spends each episode crafting elaborate plans that, on the face of it, seem to require virtues like creativity, perseverance, and intellectual courage.

It is perhaps understandable that virtue epistemologists want to avoid classing characters such as Watson, Crick, and Brain as intellectually virtuous. Although they all undoubtedly display a great many qualities that are useful when it comes to inquiry, they do so in the pursuit of more or less problematic ends: fame, fortune, and esteem on the one hand, world domination on the other. It is thus natural that we might not wish to hold these people up as exemplars of excellent inquiry. However, claiming that only those who take

[31] Zagzebski is one potential exception here. Whilst she frequently discusses 'cognitive contact with reality', her own catch-all term for epistemic goods, as the ultimate end of the virtuous agent, she also concedes the theoretical possibility that this might itself be grounded in an even loftier motivation, such as "a love of being in general" (Zagzebski 1996: 167).

epistemic goods to be their final ends can count as virtuous also serves to rule a raft of more mundane and seemingly innocuous cases. What about a student who dedicates herself to her studies because she is determined to get good grades? Or a surveyor who wants to make a success of her role and thus who commits herself whole-heartedly to the various inquiries that go into it? Both these people might display a wide range of traits that look, for all intents and purposes, like virtues, but neither are fundamentally motivated by a "love" of truth (Zagzebski 2003: 146; Baehr 2007: 101). Rather, they are motivated by a fundamental commitment to certain non-epistemic goods: to get good grades, or to do a good job. It seems much less obvious to me that these are the kinds of cases we should be trying to rule out of our theory of virtue.

In tentatively suggesting that the student or the surveyor might count as virtuous, providing all other conditions are met, it is important to clarify that I am presuming that they are both actually motivated by the truth and other epistemic goods. The kind of people I have in mind here are not simply those that see the truth as a mere means to an end, such that if an opportunity arose for, say, the student to cheat on her exams, or for the surveyor to cut corners in her work, then they would take it. Rather, they are people who are motivated by what Adams has referred to as an "appreciation of values of the realm" (2006: 127): people who acknowledge that the successful acquisition of epistemic goods is *part of what it is* to be a good student or surveyor. They may only value these goods because they want to succeed in that area – there is no love of truth for truth's sake – but they also appreciate that it is only through the attainment of those goods that they will (really) succeed in that area. Whilst this does not itself necessarily speak in favour of accepting such motivations as virtuous, I suspect that a commitment to truth of this form, in which it is bound up with and partly constitutive of various other concerns and values that one has, is a far more common occurrence than the valuing of truth for truth's sake of which responsibilists generally speak.

Why might we maintain that someone who values truth in this way is not virtuous? One reason, which I briefly touched upon in my discussion of Goldie, might be the thought that only a concern for epistemic goods for their own sake will be sufficiently robust to ensure the consistency and dependability of virtue. Roberts and Wood, for example, concede that an instrumental desire for some epistemic good might be compatible with "the highest virtue" (2007: 141), but they also clearly think that it must be accompanied by an intrinsic motive, since "where intrinsic motivation is low, performance quality will also be low" (*ibid.*: 173). The idea seems to be that if someone is *only* motivated by extrinsic goods (the career good grades might lead to, the extra business that will follow when word gets out about the quality of your work) then this will not ensure the endurance, reliability, and flexibility that is necessary for true virtue. However, as I have said, I am not talking about people who simply see the attainment of epistemic goods as a helpful but expendable means to a further end. The kinds of cases I have introduced are those of people who are genuinely committed to the pursuit of epistemic goods, but for whom this commitment is grounded in a further non-epistemic value or concern. It is an open question whether in any given case either their commitment to truth as constitutive of the deeper concern in question, or their commitment

to this deeper concern itself is sufficiently embedded and robust to ground the kind of traits we generally think of as virtuous. Then again, the same can also be said about any given person's love of epistemic goods.

I do acknowledge the pull of the intuition that, in spite of this, we may still think that loving epistemic goods for their own sake is in some way epistemically better than a commitment that is grounded in a non-epistemic passion. This picture of the lover of truth for truth's sake is redolent of many of our intellectual idols, incorruptible sages like Socrates who live a life dedicated to the pursuit of truth. This, however, simply speaks to a deeper question about the role of virtue theory: do we theorise about the virtues in order to provide ourselves with an account of an ideal that is nigh-on unobtainable for most people, or to make sense of the more recognisable excellences we encounter in our own lives? Plenty of virtue theorists have endorsed the first answer, yet I am sympathetic to the second, and to Roberts and Wood's claim that virtues make us "more human, not superhuman" (2007: 82)[32]. If that is the case, we should question whether we want to put as lofty an ideal as a love of truth for truth's sake at the centre of our theory of intellectual virtue[33].

Of course, if we are open to the possibility that people can be intellectually virtuous even if they do not take truth to be their ultimate end, and thus are willing to accept that the student and surveyor can be virtuous, then we should also be open to the suggestion that Watson, Crick, and the Brain are too. Before coming to a firm judgement about this, however, I would suggest we need a bit more information than I have provided in the rough characterisations sketched above. Specifically, I suspect that part of our reticence to ascribe virtue in their cases is the suspicion that their commitment to truth does not run even as deep as people like the student or the surveyor; the suspicion, that is, that they would just as quickly falsify results or abandon their intellectual endeavours altogether if a quicker or easier route to their ultimate goals presented itself. Indeed, discussion of Watson and Crick within the virtue epistemological literature has highlighted how their motivations led them to act in decidedly counter-productive ways, to eschew cooperation where it would have been beneficial and delay the publication of findings in an attempt to disadvantage their rivals (Roberts and Wood 2007: 294-297; Roberts 2015: 195). Failings like these are, of course, incompatible with virtue in their own right.

However, it seems at least possible that Watson and Crick, or people that closely resemble them, might have had motivational structures that more closely resemble those I have just been discussing. That is, there could be people with patently bad ends – who are selfishly hell-bent on fame or fortune, or who wish to dominate the world – yet who are

[32] This theoretical commitment also underpins, in part, my suggestion that we should recognise local traits as virtues (Section 1.3), my loosening the connection between virtue and control (Section 2.2), and my argument against Baehr's intellectualism (Section 3.2).

[33] One possible way to accommodate the distinctive kind of value afforded to people who care about truth for its own sake is to make the love of truth a distinct, and perhaps distinctly valuable, virtue. This is a route taken by Roberts and Wood (2007: Ch. 6), although I would reject their further claim that this virtue is required for every other virtue.

committed to epistemic goods as an important constitutive part of this. If we are willing to accept that the student introduced above might be intellectually virtuous then I see no reason not to say the same thing here too, save for moral squeamishness. If we want to maintain any distinction between moral and epistemic virtue[34], then that is not a good reason.

4 Consequences

The picture I have sketched of intellectual virtue thus far – of commendable character traits that involve motivations towards the epistemic good – is by now a fairly well established responsibilist orthodoxy. With a few exceptions, some of whom I have noted in the course of this chapter, all theorists who identify with the responsibilist strand of virtue epistemology, or who have been identified with it, endorse something like this picture of virtue[35]. Furthermore, it is a picture that I am similarly sympathetic to, the various tweaks and changes of emphasis I have outlined in this chapter notwithstanding. The same cannot be said of the final potential feature of virtue that I wish to touch upon, which is altogether more keenly disputed. This is the claim that, whilst good motivations might be necessary for virtue, they are not sufficient. Additionally, for an agent to count as virtuous in a particular respect, they must also be reliably *successful* in bringing about the good ends at which they aim. In this section I will briefly sketch the shape such a requirement might take and outline some of the arguments for and against. I do not intend to spend as long exploring this potential element of a theory of virtue as I have the previous three, for reasons that I will outline shortly.

The most influential proponent of incorporating some form of success requirement in a theory of intellectual virtue has been Zagzebski, who claims that the idea that virtues produce good consequences is part of our pre-theoretical understanding of the concept. It is, she claims "a plain fact about the way we ordinarily think of virtue that a virtuous person is someone who not only has a good heart but is successful in making the world the sort of place people with a good heart want it to be" (1996: 100; see also van Zyl: 2015). There are thus, for Zagzebski, two components of any given virtue, a "motivational component and a component of reliability in attaining the aims of the motivational component" (*ibid.*: 165). When it comes to our epistemic lives, this reliable success has two parts that mirror the two parts of the motivational component. First of all, the virtuous agent must actually be successful in bringing about the proximate ends of some particular virtue. In some cases this requirement will be almost superfluous, since for certain virtues trying to bring about the proximate ends is itself constitutive of bringing about those ends: trying to be careful, for example, presumably leads fairly reliably to being careful (Zagzebski 1996: 177; see also

[34] I presume that we do want to maintain such a distinction, at least at some level. This is a complicated issue, as discussed, for example, by Baehr (2011: 206-222).

[35] This is not to minimise the extent to which their theories might diverge in the detail they add to this picture or in other respects.

Montmarquet 2000). Other virtues will be less straightforward. For example, it is entirely possible, and indeed probably not uncommon, for people to want to be courageous but to fail to resist external pressures, or to want to be open-minded but automatically discount viewpoints that conflict with their own. Secondly, and perhaps more centrally, intellectual virtues are "truth conducive" (*ibid.*: 176-194). That is, intellectual virtues succeed in bringing about the ultimate ends at which they aim; namely, the generation, acquisition or dissemination of epistemic goods.

As I have already indicated, combining motivational and success elements in this way has proved controversial, with a range of theorists arguing that facts about an agent's psychology, such as their motivations and values, should exhaust our characterisation of intellectual virtue. Montmarquet worries that requiring virtues to be in truth-conducive in this way leaves the quality of one's character too susceptible to conditions in the external environment. To illustrate this, he introduces the following case:

> Let us assume that a Cartesian 'evil demon' has, unbeknownst to us, made our world such that truth is best attained by thoroughly exemplifying what, on our best crafted accounts, qualify as intellectual vices. Presumably, we would not therefore conclude that these apparent vices are and have always been virtues. (Montmarquet 1987: 482)

Montmarquet's claim is that, in the absence of any guarantee about how the world actually is, all a truth-desiring person can do is rely upon how it appears to be. If, through the machinations of some evil demon and despite all appearances and one's best efforts in investigation, the world is fundamentally *not* as it appears, then this should not invite revisions of how we assess people. Of course, if we were to discover what the evil demon was up to we might re-evaluate the traits we take to be virtues, and start encouraging behaviour that we had hitherto judged to be vicious. However, we would not judge that everyone who had up until that point been acting in seemingly virtuous but actually truth-inhibitive ways had in fact been vicious all along.

Baehr has similarly argued that the success of one's traits in the external world should not factor into our estimation of the quality of their character since this is too significantly a matter of luck (2011: 123). He does not go so far as to deny that one's success in bringing about certain valuable ends might be constitutive of a type of virtue, and indeed remains consistently open to the possibility that reliabilists, say, have simply settled upon a different variety of excellence[36]. However, he also claims that this is not the kind of excellence that is directly relevant to questions about one's personal worth, or the quality of their character. As such, he claims that Zagzebski is problematically running together two distinct notions of virtue, one motivational and the other consequentialist. If somebody with good motivations failed to bring about their desired ends, Baehr claims, we would be more likely to claim that

[36] I made a similar argument in differentiating responsibilism from reliabilism in the Introduction to this thesis. See also Battaly's (2015) virtue pluralism, in which she identifies two distinct kinds of virtue: traits that attain good ends, and traits that involve good motivations.

they are virtuous in one of two legitimate senses than to claim that they'd only fulfilled half of the requirements of virtue (*ibid.*: 135).

There are further issues to consider when weighing up whether to incorporate a success condition in our account of virtue. For example, a number of theorists have questioned whether some prominent virtues, such as open-mindedness, are actually not truth-conducive (Montmarquet 1993; Carter and Gordon 2014), or argued that certain paradigm vices, like dogmatism or conformity, might actually enable the acquisition or retention of epistemic goods (Montmarquet 1993; Zollman 2010). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that if virtue requires reliable success in bringing about epistemic goods then it would undermine the supposed virtue of many of our intellectual luminaries, figures like Aristotle, Newton, and Galileo who, for all their immense achievements, actually got a great deal wrong in their work (Montmarquet 1993; Riggs 2003). Zagzebski, for her part, offers replies to many of these objections (Zagzebski 1996: 184-194).

I will not attempt to mediate these debates here, although several of them will resurface when I consider, in Chapter 3, whether questions about the effects of our traits are relevant for vice epistemology. I introduced the possibility that there might be a success condition on virtue in this chapter because it is one of two substantive features that have been explored as a possible requirement for virtue, playing a prominent role in Zagzebski's highly influential virtue theory. It also echoes, as we shall see, one extant strand of vice epistemology. Nonetheless, its status remains controversial. In particular, the claim put forward by Baehr, Montmarquet, and others, that even if virtuous agents likely will be successful in worlds like ours this success is too contingent to be an actual *requirement* for virtue, is compelling. For these reasons, I will not offer extended discussion of the success condition in the same way that I did for the motivational component, which is much more widely endorsed, or of the two pre-theoretical components of the agential conception of virtue introduces in Sections 1 and 2. Similarly, when I speak of the core responsibilist view of the nature of intellectual virtue, it is to the conjunction of these three features that I will refer: that intellectual virtues are aspects of our character, for which we are praiseworthy (or otherwise commendable), and that involve good epistemic motivations.

5 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been an explication of the nature of intellectual virtue. Specifically, I have done two things. First, I have identified two pre-theoretical components of the kind of trait responsibilists are interested: that virtues are aspects of our intellectual character; and that they reflect positively upon us in a way that makes them the appropriate basis for certain deeply personal reactive attitudes, like praise and admiration. I have referred to this as the agential conception of virtue. I then identified two features of the traits that are

often advocated as meeting this pre-theoretical characterisation: the widely accepted claim that virtues involve good epistemic motivations, and the more contentious suggestion that they also reliably produce good epistemic effects.

These two sets of features will each play a different role when I turn to a direct exposition of intellectual vice. Just as responsibilist virtue epistemologists have provided an account of the agential virtues, my focus will be on providing an account of the agential vices. So, just as they have provided an account of a kind of virtue that reflects positively on one's character, I will be looking for a kind of vice that reflects *negatively* on one's character. Of course, an obvious place to begin this investigation is to consider whether the substantive features that responsibilists have identified as central to this conception of virtue might be similarly central to the corresponding conception of vice. In other words, perhaps we can develop a viable account of intellectual vice that focusses on the quality of an agent's epistemic motivations, or on the epistemic effects of their traits. Answering these questions in turn will be the focus of my next two chapters.

2

Vice, Virtue, and Motivations

I will now turn my attention to the task which will occupy me for the remainder of this thesis: theorising the nature of intellectual vice. I will begin by noting two features of the current literature on this topic. The first is its relative scarcity. Recently, theorists including Heather Battaly (2014, 2016a), Quassim Cassam (2016), Ian James Kidd (2016), and Alessandra Tanesini (2016) have begun to do some important work in what Cassam refers to as 'vice epistemology', the "study of the nature, identity, and epistemological significance of the epistemic vices" (Cassam 2016: 160). However, prior to this uptake in interest, vice remained a largely neglected topic within the otherwise flourishing virtue epistemological literature. Where discussed by epistemologists, intellectual vice was generally invoked only as either derivative from or an aid to the development of a theory of virtue[1].

Nonetheless, where attention *has* turned to vice, either in passing or more purposefully, it has been possible to witness a form of orthodoxy emerging. A wide number of theorists have either argued for, or else assumed, a version of what I refer to as the *motivational approach* to vice. For example, Linda Zagzebski grounds criticism of intellectual vices in a "defect of motivation" (1996:209). James Montmarquet identifies vice with a "lack of effort" (2000: 138-9). Jason Baehr claims that vices involve a "lack of desire for knowledge" (2010: 209). And Heather Battaly argues that they require "dis-valuable motivations" (2016a:

[1] See Zagzebski (1996) and Baehr (2011), respectively, for two seminal texts in virtue epistemology that discuss vice in this way. Some early exceptions to the neglect of vice include Swank (2000), Fricker (2007), Baehr (2010), and Battaly (2010). Roberts and Woods' *Intellectual Virtue* (2007), although oriented around virtue, does contain detailed discussion of several vices.

106). Each of these theorists accept, more or less explicitly, the claim that vice requires a defective motivational state; specifically, that the central feature of epistemic vice is the presence of some inappropriate orientation towards the epistemic good. This orthodoxy is the second feature of the current literature that interests me in this chapter[2].

I highlight these two features – the comparative lack of direct attention paid to vice by virtue epistemologists, and the widespread acceptance of the motivational approach to vice – because ultimately I will argue that they both arise, at least in part, from the same underlying theoretical commitment. This is an assumption that I will refer to as the *inversion thesis*: the claim that virtue and vice are mirror images of each other, such that they are characterised by the same, if opposing, features. As we shall see, if we accept the inversion thesis and endorse the motivational approach to *virtue*, which I introduced in Chapter 1, then it makes sense both to spend less time discussing vice (since our account of vice will be structurally the same as that of virtue) and to presume that vice will be characterised by some bad motivational state (since virtue is characterised by some *good* motivational state). In this chapter, I will discuss the inversion thesis and the motivational approach to vice in tandem. Ultimately, I will conclude that the motivational approach to vice is inadequate: it cannot account for some important and intuitive cases of intellectual vice. As significant, however, is what this reveals about the relation between virtue and vice, and about the methodology of vice epistemology. Even if virtue and vice are opposites, I will argue, this should not lead us to conclude that a theory of one will fall neatly out of a theory of the other. The failure of the motivational approach thus provides a cautionary tale about reliance on the inversion thesis more generally.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 1 I consider why it is that vice, both in epistemology and in ethics, has enjoyed so little attention as compared to the counterpart concept of virtue. I suggest that widespread acceptance of the inversion thesis is one important part of the explanation. In Section 2, I demonstrate how an implicit acceptance of the inversion thesis has played a powerful role in shaping discussion of vice and related concepts in ethics, and begin to bring into focus some of the limitations of theorising about vice in this way. Then, in Section 3, I return to epistemology and argue that the inversion thesis explains the widespread acceptance of the motivational approach to vice. I demonstrate that, on either of the two ways of making sense of the claim that vice is the opposite of virtue, the motivational approach gives us an overly narrow account of the nature of vice. Focussing on motivations, in other words, cannot account for the full array of ways in which we can be intellectually vicious. In Section 4, I diagnose why it is that virtue and vice come apart in this way, such that it makes sense to think of one and not the other as characterised by a particular motivational state. I show that this asymmetry arises from the more general theoretical commitment that virtues are praiseworthy and vices blameworthy. I conclude, in Section 5,

[2] This orthodoxy does not go unchallenged. Cassam (2016), in particular, has been prominent in arguing for an alternative picture of the character vices, as I explore in Chapter 3.

by considering what the inadequacy of the motivational approach signifies about both the relationship between virtue and vice and the methodology of vice epistemology[3].

1 The Inversion Thesis

Sustained attention to intellectual vice is a relatively recent development within modern virtue epistemology[4]. For the most part, virtue epistemologists have exhibited a slant towards the positive, an interest in the virtues that constitute a form of intellectual excellence, as opposed to the vices that constitute an intellectual deficiency. In many ways, the extent of this imbalance in attention is surprising. For a start, the concept of vice is a central one for any theory of virtue, serving alongside virtue as one of the twin poles of character-based evaluations. What's more, intellectual vices also have great practical significance, with character vices like arrogance, closed-mindedness, negligence, and snobbery a real and familiar aspects of our daily lives. Many of these vices are frequently invoked to explain harms and malpractice both at the individual and societal level, from climate change denialism (Wilder 2017) to education attainment gaps (Grove 2013) and (from both sides) stuttering Brexit negotiations (Beattie 2017; Hunt 2017).

However, in at least one respect the comparative neglect of vice within virtue epistemology was, perhaps, to be expected. As I have already noted at various points in this thesis, responsibilist virtue epistemologists have, to a significant extent, been inspired and influenced by virtue ethics. And, in virtue ethics, a similar imbalance in attention between virtue and vice plays out. For the Ancients, to whom the virtue ethical tradition traces its roots, this focus on the positive was in keeping with the practical aims of their ethical projects. As Aristotle put it when discussing the purpose of his inquiry in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, it is "not in order to acquire knowledge that we are considering what virtue is, but to become good people" (*NE*: II.2.1103b). With this aim in mind, it made sense for his main interest to lie in the traits of the good agent, not the bad one[5]. Nonetheless, this focus has persisted long since ethics ceased to be viewed as a primarily practical discipline. Contemporary ethics, Amelie Oksenberg Rorty observes, still tells us "a great deal about virtues and ideals, but very little about vice and malevolence" (2001: xi).

All sorts of more or less idiosyncratic reasons might account for any given theorist expressing an over-riding interest in virtue or neglecting vice. For example, Robin Dillon

[3] Parts of this chapter, in particular of Sections 1, 3, and 4, develop material first published in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* as 'Motivational Approaches to Intellectual Vice' (Crerar Forth.)

[4] As I noted in the Introduction to this thesis, this imbalance is a phenomenon that is peculiar to modern virtue epistemology. Historically, philosophical studies of the bad habits, vices, or corruptions of the mind were a much more common undertaking.

[5] Compare also Hume: "Why rake into those corners of nature which spread a nuisance all around? Why dig up the pestilence from the pit in which it is buried?" (1751: Section IX Conclusion, Part II).

(2012) has suggested that feminist theorists have avoided placing too much emphasis on the everyday vices that underpin sexist, racist, or classist behaviour out of concern for seeming to attribute unjust social and political phenomena to individual agency, rather than to social structures. Meanwhile, in virtue epistemology, it is likely that the early focus on analysing success terms like knowledge and justification had a role to play in focussing attention on the positive. More general factors might also be at play, however. Dillon has suggested that, in ethics at least, two widely held assumptions underpin the general neglect of vice. First, she claims that philosophers for much of history have laboured under the presumption that vice is something dramatic, rare, and exceptional. Consider, by way of illustration, Rosalind Hursthouse's suggestion that "few of us (by which I mean myself and you, my readers) are likely to be steeped in vice" (Hursthouse 1999: 175) or, from an epistemological perspective, Cassam's observation that his counter-example to the motivational approach does actually want to believe the truth, just "like the rest of us" (Cassam 2016: 168). Perhaps more telling than either of these examples, simply reflect upon the connotations that accompany the folk concept of viciousness, which conjures up images of brutality, violence, and cruelty, the very worst of the vices.

Of course, the question of the extent to which this assumption has been held by philosophers is an empirical one[6], as is the validity of the assumption itself. However, the answer to the latter question at least is clear. I take the claim that the intellectual vices are rare or dramatic to be as clearly false as Dillon does the corresponding claim about ethical vices. It is not difficult to think of an epistemic analogue of the class of character traits identified by Judith Shklar as 'ordinary vices', "the sort of conduct we all expect, nothing spectacular and unusual" (1984: 1). Some of the examples mentioned at the outset of this section – closed-mindedness, snobbery, negligence, and so on – would probably fit the bill.

More theoretically significant than the claim that vice is unusual is the second assumption identified by Dillon. This is the tendency to assume that vice is the opposite of virtue, and as such does not merit a stand-alone analysis that is distinct from our analysis of the latter. Of course, in some sense it is trivially true that virtue and vice are opposites; they are the opposing poles of virtue theoretical character evaluations, for a start. However, Dillon is highlighting a more powerful assumption than just this:

> Vice, it might be thought, is just the contradictory or contrary of virtue. So, if you understand what virtue is in general or understand a particular virtue, then you need only negate or invert the account, or move the indicator from "just right" to "too much" or "too little," to know what vice or a particular vice is. There is thus nothing to be gained from looking at vice directly. (Dillon 2012: 88)

This quotation from Dillon encapsulates the essence of what I shall be referring to as the *inversion thesis*: the claim that virtue and vice are not merely evaluative opposites but

[6] One theorist who clearly did *not* take this position was Philippa Foot, who suggested that virtues are a bulwark against the natural human drift towards badness (2002: 8). A similar position in virtue epistemology appears in Roberts and Wood (2007: 82).

structural mirror images of one another, such that they are characterised by the same, if opposing, features. As Dillon notes, there are two ways of understanding this relation: that vice is either the 'contradictory' or the 'contrary' of virtue. To put this point a slightly different way, we can understand vice as involving the *absence* of the good-making feature of virtue, which would entail that all character traits (perhaps of a relevant sort) are either virtues or vices. Or, we can understand vice as involving the *presence* of a quality that is structurally symmetrical but evaluatively opposed to the good-making feature of virtue; it is not the simple lack of virtue that makes us vicious, but the presence of some actively bad-making quality. Either way, if we uncritically accept this thesis then a lack of attention to vice would be justifiable; after all, a theory of vice would fall neatly out of a theory of virtue. We would have two for the price of one.

2 Inversion in Ethics

The impact of the inversion thesis, both in ethics and in epistemology, can be measured not only in the lack of direct discussion of vice. In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore how its acceptance has also been significant in shaping work that *has* been done on vice and other related concepts. In Section 3, I will argue that the inversion thesis accounts for the widespread endorsement of a motivational analysis of intellectual vice, despite the apparent implausibility of this view. For now, I shall focus on the role it has played in ethics.

There are, of course, a number of differences between the ethical and epistemic domains, and these might affect how we come to treat their respective categories of vice. Perhaps foremost of these is the possibility of malevolence, or the deliberate willing of or taking pleasure in the bad. In the moral domain, the kind of opposition to the good in principle that is emblematic of malevolence, as exemplified in fictional characters like Milton's Satan, the Joker, or the Sith Lord Palpatine, is a terrifying prospect. Thankfully, it also appears to be a rare one. Nonetheless, its impact on popular culture and the collective consciousness suggests that it is at least not one people have much difficulty countenancing[7]. *Epistemic* malevolence, or the opposition to the *epistemic* good on principle, is different. It is, as Baehr (2010) has argued, possible to come up with examples of people who are opposed to the epistemic good of some specific person or group of people; the slave-owners described by Frederick Douglass in his autobiography are one example Baehr provides. However, the prospect of true "epistemic rebels" (Battaly 2014: 73), people who are opposed to the epistemic good in principle and who purposefully pursue falsehoods and ignorance, seems

[7] It is also one that has long attracted philosophical attention, as discussed by Rorty (2001). As I shall note in Section 2.1 below, a literature concerning the possibility of evil has recently been flourishing within contemporary analytic philosophy.

altogether more far-fetched. If there are any such agents, it seems unlikely they would survive for long.

A related difference between vice in ethics and in epistemology concerns the possibility of awareness of one's vicious behaviour[8]. Generally speaking, people have a *prima facie* interest in the beliefs they form being true. This is not to claim that people, generally speaking, are motivated by truth. Rather, it is the weaker point that insofar as someone has reason to believe that something is false, they will generally be less likely to believe it[9]. Furthermore, intellectual vices are generally not conducive to truth; as I shall argue in Chapter 3, we can accept that this is the case even if we do not think it is *constitutive* of vice to be obstructive to epistemic goods. The self-awareness that one's behaviour is epistemically vicious is therefore tantamount to the awareness that one's behaviour is not conducive to truth. This realisation will likely elicit one of two reactions: either a change in one's behaviour, or else an attempt to rationalise it, so that one's closed-mindedness (say) becomes justified to oneself as a form of diligence or courage. Either way, the vice "will flee when exposed to the light", as Montmarquet puts it (2008: 376), at least until one's attention turns elsewhere[10]. Again, however, the same does not seem to hold true for ethical vice. There are not the same barriers to someone's knowingly being stingy, or inconsiderate, or cruel, either akratically or purposefully.

These and perhaps other differences between the two domains notwithstanding, there remain significant overlaps and parallels between the development of virtue theoretic concepts in ethics and in epistemology. Indeed, as I have already noted, many virtue epistemologists who focus on intellectual character explicitly model their accounts of intellectual virtue on the moral virtues; indeed, there is a prominent strand of virtue epistemology that treats the intellectual virtues as a subset of the ethical[11]. As such, it will be helpful to consider how the inversion thesis plays out in the ethical domain, before turning to consider the comparatively smaller literature on epistemic virtue and vice. In the course of this discussion I hope to make two points. First, I will demonstrate the role the inversion

[8] This is, I take it, a different issue to Cassam's (2015) notion of 'stealthy' vices. Stealthy vices are vices that are self-concealing, in that the possession of that vice serves to impede the conscious critical reflection necessary to discover one's own epistemic faults or flaws. Not every vice is stealthy in this way: closed-mindedness is, whilst carelessness is not. The point I am making, which concerns the possibility of consciously acting in vicious ways rather than of discovering, upon reflection, that one is or has been vicious, does generalise to most vices.

[9] This point could be made, in decreasing order of strength, on conceptual, psychological, or practical grounds. Any of the three would serve my purposes. I also do not intend to rule out completely the possibility of what Hookway (2003b) has referred to as 'full-blooded epistemic akrasia'.

[10] Montmarquet (2000, 2008) argues for a similar conclusion as that for which I am currently arguing, but from different reasoning. Montmarquet's claim is that, when it comes to what he calls the 'internalist' vices, one cannot really try to be vicious. This is because he characterises these vices as a form of *failure* to attend to truth. We cannot purposefully fail to attend to something, in just the same way as we cannot try to have an accident. However, this does not get Montmarquet to his conclusion. Even if trying to do something that is normally a consequence of negligence means it is no longer a case of negligence, it can still be something bad. Trying to be intellectually careless might mean you are no longer being intellectually careless, for example, but it might just mean that you are being cynical or lazy instead.

[11] The most prominent proponent of this view is Zagzebski (1996). I do not intend to take a stand on this issue here, but for a helpful discussion of the different positions in this debate, see Battaly (2013a).

thesis has played in shaping discussion of vice and related concepts within ethics. Second, I will begin to motivate the thought that developing a theory of vice by inverting a pre-existing account of virtue is more problematic than is often assumed.

2.1 Evil and the Mirror Thesis

Before turning to explore ethical vice directly, I will first explore a related topic that has attracted growing attention within moral philosophy in recent years: the nature of evil. Evil is an evaluative term that can be applied in at least three different domains: one's axiology might postulate evil as a fundamental and distinct moral *value*, as the Manichean's did; one might refer to particular *agents* as evil; and one might describe particular *acts* as evil. Although undoubtedly related, that these different domains of evil come apart can be seen in the fact that it does not seem incoherent to question the existence of evil of one of these forms whilst assuming or arguing for the existence of others. For example, it is not unusual to deny that evil is a foundational positive value or force and maintain instead that it is 'parasitic' on or derivative of the good, whilst at the same time arguing that acts or people can be evil provided they stand in an (in)appropriate relation to the good (Midgely 1984; Adams 2006). The possibility of evil personhood is perhaps the most contested of the three[12], and it is this that brings us closest to vice.

Of course, evil and vice are importantly different, with evil in one sense broader and in another sense deeper than vice. It is broader, since evil refers to some general state of character whereas vice, or viciousness, can refer to specific individual character traits. It is also deeper, since evil is by definition grave and abhorrent, something beyond the pale, whereas vices can be comparatively minor defects. However, there are also important similarities between the two concepts. Both are terms of moral condemnation and criticism, and it is surely likely, if not necessary, that an evil person will have at least some significant vices. Indeed, two prominent recent accounts of evil personhood define evil in virtue- and vice-theoretical terms, with evil people those who either lack any moral virtues (Haybron 2002) or who possess the most extreme moral vices to the most extreme extent (Barry 2010).

Aside from these general connections between evil and vice, the reason why the debate concerning the nature of evil personhood is particularly relevant for present purposes is a controversy that has recently surfaced concerning evil's relation to moral sainthood, an evaluative term that stands in a similar relation to evil as virtue does to vice. It has frequently been assumed in the philosophical literature that the morally evil person is a straightforward opposite of the morally best person, or moral saint. Thus, according to Colin McGinn, the constitutive dispositions of the evil person and the saint are the "exact reverse of one another" (1997: 61), Daniel Haybron claims that the moral saint is the "positive counterpart to the evil person" (2002: 275), and Peter Brian Barry develops his account of evil

[12] See Russell (2006) for a discussion of 'evil scepticism'.

personhood from the idea that someone is evil "just in case she is a perverse mirror image of the moral saint" (2009: 164). Barry refers to this assumption as the *mirror thesis*, and notes that it comes in weaker and stronger forms. In its weakest sense, according to which moral saints are the morally best sort of people and evil people the morally worst, it seems both obviously true and also uninformative. For it to actually do any theoretical work we need to subscribe to a stronger claim: that sainthood and evil are both constituted or accounted for by the same sorts of feature as one another, just in ways that are evaluatively opposed.

The parallels between the mirror and inversion theses are plain to see. In both cases, theorists have moved from a trivial claim about the status of two evaluative properties to a more substantive, and therefore more controversial, claim about the nature of the traits that manifest those properties. In both cases the acceptance of the latter claim has had a significant impact on the shape of theorising about the negative evaluative property, since it seemingly undermines the need to undertake such theorising in a direct or stand-alone way. Why bother thinking about this negative property, the thinking goes, if facts about its nature can be straightforwardly inferred from those about the positive property.

Unlike its counterpart in virtue theory, however, the mirror thesis has not only been explicitly brought to light, but also called into question. Luke Russell (2010), for example, has argued that there are important differences between sainthood and evil; notably, that the moral saint must be good in all respects, whilst an evil person may well be vicious (albeit to an extreme level) in certain domains whilst exemplifying virtue in others. Similarly, Philip Pettit (2015) has argued for an asymmetry between *good* and evil, since there is a robustness to doing good that is lacking in acts of evil. For someone's actions to have been good they must have been disposed to act in this way even if circumstances had been different and more challenging. No such counter-factual requirements, Pettit claims, are required for evil; all that matters is that one actually allowed sufficiently bad things to happen. What's more, both Russell and Pettit think that once we stop and reflect upon the role these evaluative properties play, it makes sense that there should be such asymmetries. A demanding, perhaps even unattainable, standard of goodness that we can aspire to and use to guide our decisions is a helpful thing to have, but there is no such utility to be gained from an unattainable ideal of evil. If it is inappropriate to try and derive our concept of evil from our concepts of moral goodness[13], we might wonder, then should we not be similarly wary of a derivation of vice from virtue?

2.2 Aristotle on Vice

Turning now to direct discussions of vice within ethics, I start, as so many virtue theorists do, with Aristotle. This represents the obvious starting point when looking at vice, both

[13] This remains controversial. Barry, for his part, has attempted a defence of the mirror thesis against Russell's criticisms (Barry 2011).

because of Aristotle's over-arching influence over contemporary virtue ethics and because of the influence of Aristotelian virtue ethics, in turn, over virtue epistemology. As is well established, Aristotle recognised three states of human character short of virtue, offering discussion not only of vice but also of *akrasia* (incontinence, or weakness of will) and *enkrateia* (continence, or self-control). To avoid getting side-tracked, however, I shall focus here on vice.

There are, in fact, two different pictures of vice that we can reconstruct from Aristotle's work (Roochnik 2007). The account often taken to be his main or intended theory (for example, by Annas 1993; Battaly 2013a, 2014), perhaps because he is more explicit in its development or because it is deemed to fit better with Aristotle's general moral psychology, is that presented in Book VII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here, Aristotle equates vice with acting in accordance with a faulty conception of the good. Specifically, vice requires two things: the agent must be disposed to have motives and perform actions that are in fact bad, and they must do so out of choice (*NE* VII.8.1151a). 'Choice', in Aristotle's thought, is a technical term that involves acting upon a 'rational desire', a desire for what one believes to be 'fine', or good, as opposed to a desire driven by the passions for something that is merely 'advantageous' (Irwin 2001). The upshot of this is that rational desire, and thus choice and vice, requires a conception of the good that guides the agent's actions in particular ways. What differentiates the vicious person from the virtuous, who also acts not from passion but from a conception of the good, is that the vicious person has a conception of the good that is objectively wrong. Hence, their acting in accordance with it consistently leads to bad acts.

The vicious agent Aristotle seems to have in mind here is someone like Eugene Achike, an abusive father in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2004). Eugene is a devout and zealous Catholic, who is perennially tormented by the worry that his children might fall into sin. Whilst perhaps an admirable concern in itself, Eugene's understanding of sin is dramatically skewed, classing as egregiously sinful such acts as spending any time with non-Catholic 'heathens', taking painkillers before receiving Holy Communion, and failing to finish top of the class at school. Even more skewed is his understanding of the best way to guard against such lapses in piety, and consequently he strictly controls his children's every waking minute and exacts brutally violent punishments for any perceived transgressions. Eugene has an objectively false conception of the good, and his cruel acts are a consequence of his consistently acting in ways that he understands to be pursuant to it.

If this is the kind of agent Aristotle does have in mind as vicious, then it presents him with a difficulty. According to Aristotle's general teleology, a virtue is that which enables its possessor to perform their function or characteristic activity well (*NE* II.6.1106a). For humans, this function is to live a life of reason; or, to put the point more precisely, "activity of the soul and actions in accordance with reason" (*NE* I.7.1098a)[14]. This, Aristotle goes on

[14] References to the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) are to the translation by Crisp (2000).

to add, must involve both the rational and non-rational parts of the soul, and in the virtuous agent the non-rational part of the soul is not merely obedient to the rational part, but is in agreement with it. It is here, however, that the problem arises. For it seems that, whilst Aristotle's virtuous agent as developed elsewhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics* meets this characterisation of a life in accordance with the human function, so too does the vicious agent (Irwin 2001). As we have seen, according to the picture sketched in Book VII, the vicious person does seem to live a life in accordance with reason. Eugene Achike is someone who acts in accordance with choice, or rational desire; he acts not because he has been swayed by some passion, but because he judges those cruel acts to be in keeping with his conception of the good. Whilst there is every indication that his passions are in keeping with this conception of the good, as they are in the virtuous agent, it very much seems to be his rational nature in control. The unattractive conclusion would appear to be that Achike is fulfilling the human function, and thus flourishing, just as much as the virtuous agent.

In light of this difficulty, it is perhaps a good thing that elsewhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle seems to suggest a very different conception of the vicious agent. As Jozef Müller (2015) has demonstrated, Aristotle consistently identifies the desirability of different types of character traits in terms of the extent to which they unify the soul: the better the trait, the more it integrates non-rational desires with reason. This is in keeping with his picture of human flourishing, as sketched above. What this would seem to predict is that the vicious agent, who possesses the worst character trait available to ordinary humans, should not be some rational adherent to their conception of the good, but rather should be someone who experiences a drastic discord between reason and desire. This prediction, Müller argues, is borne out in various passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, such as in Book III where Aristotle claims that the intemperate person "has an appetite for all pleasant things, or the most pleasant, and is led by his appetite to choose them at the cost of everything else" (*NE* III.11.1119a), and in Book VII, where he distinguishes vice from incontinence by claiming that the former "ruins" the rational capacity to act in pursuit of an end (*NE* VII.8.1151a). The picture *these* comments paint of the vicious agent is not someone dispassionately pursuing what they, wrongly, take to be the fine and good, but some "irrevocably conflicted and undisciplined pursuer of pleasures at hand" (Müller 2015: 460).

I am not directly interested in the exegetical issue of how, or if, these views are to be reconciled and whether one or the other represents Aristotle's true view[15]. What is worth noting is that, on either view, both accounts present the vicious agent as either opposed to or lacking something that the virtuous agent possesses: in the first case, the virtuous agent acts in accordance with a correct conception of the good whilst the vicious agent acts in

[15] The latter does have the advantage of clearly delineating virtue from vice, in a way that the former fails to. However, as Irwin (2001) has noted, it does not really solve the problem of how to distinguish the principled vicious agent from the virtuous; rather, it simply transforms it from a problem Aristotle builds into his view into one he fails to consider.

accordance with an incorrect one[16]; and in the second, the virtuous agent has an integration of desires with rational choice whereas the vicious agent is seemingly unable to make rational choice. Furthermore, both views suffer as a consequence, since both construe vice too narrowly. I take it that both the cold-eyed Achike and the undisciplined pursuer of pleasure at hand represent two plausible, and indeed central, candidates for vice. Insofar as each view developed from Aristotle fails to capture one or the other, they provide too narrow an analysis of vice. As we shall see, this is a common failing of accounts that model vice as a straightforward inverse of virtue.

2.3 Hurka, Adams, and Orientations

The final illustration of inversion reasoning within ethics that I will draw upon is the views of two contemporary virtue ethicists: Thomas Hurka and Robert Merrihew Adams. My reasoning for focussing on these theorists in particular is partly due to the fact that they are two of the very few contemporary virtue ethicists who devote sustained analysis to the discussion of vice on its own terms. They are also both theorists who identify an orientation towards certain core values as being the characteristic mark of virtue, and thus there are obvious parallels between their ethical views and the motivational orthodoxy in virtue epistemology. Interestingly, however, whilst Hurka takes vice to be a fairly straightforward inversion of virtue, Adams appears to recognise that the picture is more complex than this.

In *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (2001) Hurka offers what he refers to as a 'recursive' theory of virtue and vice. On this view, virtues and vices are intrinsic goods (or bads) that derive their value from the relation they stand in to other intrinsic goods (or bads). Specifically, virtues are attitudes to goods or evils that are themselves intrinsically good (Hurka 2001: 20). The most straightforward type of intrinsically good attitude is an attitude that loves the intrinsic good or hates the intrinsic evil, and does so for its own sake[17]. Precisely what we take to be intrinsically good is not important here; what is central is the general idea that if there is something that is intrinsically good then having the appropriate orientation towards it (desiring it, taking pleasure in it, or actively pursuing it) in a way that is not dependent on its consequences is itself a good thing. So, if we suppose that general well-being, say, is an intrinsic good, then any attitude that is positively oriented towards the general well-being (e.g. the wish to promote it if it does not presently obtain, or taking pleasure in it when it does), and is so just because it is good, will also be intrinsically good. These intrinsically good attitudes are what Hurka takes to be virtues.

[16] Müller, in fact, accuses proponents of this first view of assuming that the vicious agent "*must* be a polar opposite of the virtuous person" (2015: 461), and consequently reading this assumption into the text.

[17] In addition to these 'recursive' attitudes, Hurka (2001: 18) also discusses what he calls intrinsically good 'relational' attitudes, which are attitudes that love the cause of an intrinsic good because it is the cause of an intrinsic good (*mutatis mutandis* for vice and bads).

Hurka's account of vice initially proceeds in much the same way. Vices, he claims, are intrinsically evil attitudes, the most obvious example of which is hating the intrinsic good or loving the intrinsic evil. This, however, is only one class of vice, a category that Hurka calls *pure* vices and that includes things such as malice and self-hatred (Hurka 2001: 92). He then complicates this by recognising two further categories of vice. To start with, he rejects the suggestion, implied by specifying that loving the good is virtuous and hating the good is vicious, that the intermediate state between these two attitudes – indifference to the good – is neutral. Rather, he argues that if something is intrinsically good (or intrinsically evil) then indifference towards it, or even being mildly for (or against) it, is intrinsically evil and thus vicious. These are the vices of *indifference*, which include things like callousness, sloth, and shamelessness (*ibid.*: 94). He finally suggests a third category of vice, the vices of *disproportion*, which pick out combinations of attitudes that, alone, might be appropriate – both oriented in the right way and above the minimum threshold of concern – but that, combined, reveal something problematically out of kilter. The excessive concern for one's own well-being as compared to others' that characterises the selfish agent, or to one's own safety that characterises the cowardly, fit the bill here. In the end, Hurka's position is that virtue is some minimum threshold of concern for the good, whilst vice is any level of concern that sits below this threshold.

Hurka's account of virtue and, particularly, vice can be helpfully contrasted with Adams'. For the most part, Adams' focus is less the individual virtues and more the state that we can refer to as 'capital V' Virtue, the "holistic property of having a good moral character" (Adams 2006: 32). Virtue involves "a persisting excellence in being for the good" (*ibid.*: 14). Similarly to Hurka, then, his view relies on a claim about the intrinsic goodness (or 'excellence') of standing in a certain relation to a particular class of goods. He understands the goods in question broadly, eschewing any sharp dividing lines between what we might conventionally think of as moral goods (namely, others' rights and well-being) and, say, aesthetic or intellectual goods. As for the appropriate relation to these goods, the 'being for', this might involve promoting them, loving them, respecting them, or other such intentional states. Not all ways of being for these goods count as an excellence, however, since one can pursue them selfishly or unjustly. By defining the orientation towards the good that is characteristic of Virtue as an *excellence*, Adams means to identify it with a kind of intrinsic value, "the objective and non-instrumental goodness of that which is worthy to be honored, loved, admired, or (in the extreme case) worshiped, for its own sake" (*ibid.*: 24).

Although there are many similarities between their views, Adams' account is purposefully less formulaic than Hurka's. For Hurka, judgements of virtue and vice essentially boil down to two considerations: how strong is someone's orientation towards a given value, and how good is that value[18]? Adams, however, is sceptical of attempts to be so

[18] Hurka does also add some modal conditions to complicate these matters; for example, that concern for goods or evils that only have a remote possibility of existing are less valuable, and that one should feel more strongly about unexpected goods or evils (Hurka 2001: 116-128).

clear-cut when it comes to judgements of virtue and vice ("we have no algorithm for excellence", he remarks; *ibid.*: 26). One of the ways this comes through is in how he transfers this account of Virtue to deal with the individual virtues. Whilst individual virtues all indicate ways that one's being for the good can be excellent, not all individual virtues are ways of being for the good. There are straightforward motivational virtues, traits like benevolence that are themselves ways of being for things that one should be commended for being for. However, there are also what he calls structural virtues, which include traits like courage and self-control that may not be able to make one morally good in their own right but that are nonetheless necessary for a being for the good to be excellent. Even this bipartite distinction is not exhaustive of virtue; practical wisdom, he notes, does not fit neatly in either camp (*ibid.*: 34).

More importantly, Adams' resistance to neat systemisation also comes out in his discussion of vice. Implicit in this discussion, perhaps, is a recognition that the relationship between virtue and vice might not be as simple as the inversion thesis maintains. As we saw above, there are stronger and weaker ways to understand the relation of opposition between virtue and vice. Hurka accepts a fairly strong interpretation, identifying one's orientation to intrinsic goods or evils as the defining feature of both virtue and vice. Adams, by comparison, takes a more zoomed out view of their relation to one another. At a general level he clearly sees them as directly in opposition – a vice, he explains, is "a trait that counts against the overall excellence of the way you are for and against goods and evils" (*ibid.*: 36) – but when it comes to accounting for what makes individual traits vicious in this way he notes a range of different possibilities. So, whilst there are such things as vices of indifference, which involve a failure to be for some important good, and vices of malice, which involve being for some evil or against some good for its own sake, he also observes that, since we are limited creatures, it is not always vicious to be against some good. Additionally, he acknowledges at least two other categories of vice. Vices of *weakness* are deficiencies in self-government, and include things like cowardice and incontinence that stand opposed to the structural virtues touched upon above. Vices of *excess* are a bit more complicated. In a sense, they involve a concern for some good that has become "swollen" (*ibid.*: 38), but the viciousness more accurately consists in their failure to flexibly respond to different kinds of reasons and considerations. What is wrong with gluttons is not that they love food too much, but that they are so invested in that good that they fail to ever prioritise any other considerations.

3 Inversion and The Motivational Approach

The assumption of a robust symmetry between virtue and vice is as prevalent in epistemology as it is in ethics. It can be seen, for example, in epistemologists focussing more or less exclusively on the development of a theory of virtue, assuming that "it will be clear how the

vices can be understood as appropriately contrary qualities" (Montmarquet 1993: 19). It can be seen in the often uncritical move from the explication of a particular feature of virtue to the presumption of a corresponding feature of vice, as when Montmarquet argues from the "*symmetry*" with virtue that vices must involve a failure to attend to truth (Montmarquet 2000: 138), or when Battaly generates a responsibilist conception of vice by taking features of the orthodox view of virtue and inverting them (Battaly 2016a: 103-106). It can also be seen in similar moves in the other direction, as when Baehr gets his personal worth view of virtue off the ground by observing how vices can be seen to detract from our personal worth (Baehr 2011: 91).

More generally, acceptance of the inversion thesis can be seen in the widespread acceptance of a particular view of intellectual vice: the motivational approach, according to which intellectual vice involves being inappropriately oriented towards epistemic goods. As we saw in Chapter 1, it is responsibilist orthodoxy that virtue requires some appropriate orientation towards the epistemic goods. If we accept the inversion thesis, then it would be natural to assume that vice would involve some inappropriate orientation. Specifically, we might think that vice requires either the *presence* of bad epistemic motivations, or the *absence* of the good motivations that are characteristic of virtue. In this section, I shall demonstrate that, whilst both views do enjoy some support within the literature, neither can provide an adequate account of intellectual vice. Both forms of motivational approach, in short, fail to account for the viciousness of some important paradigm cases. This lends more direct support to the conclusion, implied in Section 2, that we need to be more careful about relying too uncritically upon the supposed symmetry between virtue and vice when doing vice epistemology.

3.1 The Presence Conception

The argument from the inversion thesis to a motivational view of vice is fairly straightforward. It proceeds from the claim that an agent's *positive* orientation towards epistemic goods grounds the excellence of intellectual virtue, by way of the claim that virtue and vice are opposites, to the claim that some contrasting, *negative* orientation grounds the dis-value of intellectual vice. One way of understanding this contrasting orientation is that, since virtue requires the presence of good epistemic motivations, vice requires the presence of bad epistemic motivations. Mirroring how virtue requires that we are ultimately motivated by epistemic goods, vice on this account would require that we are, ultimately, motivated by epistemic bads (or, perhaps, away from epistemic goods). I call this form of motivational approach the *presence conception*.

Heather Battaly has explicated a responsibilist conception of vice in several places, and in so doing often suggests something like the presence conception[19]. She construes of vice as something active, which involves being motivated in some (in)appropriate way, claiming that, like virtues, "epistemic vices will also require motivations" (2016a: 105) and that they are "partly composed of bad epistemic motives" (2017a: 5). Furthermore, and again echoing the conventional responsibilist story of virtue, she claims that it is these motivations that ground the distinctive dis-value of vice: "epistemic vices will get some (or all) of their dis-value from the dis-valuable motivations they require" (2016a: 106)[20]. To be at all viable, of course, this picture requires that we construe bad motivations more broadly than as simply motivations for ignorance or for falsehood; as I remarked in Section 2, true epistemic rebels that desire these bads for their own sake are likely to be rare. Accordingly, Battaly counts not only the motivations to not believe certain things or to remain ignorant as epistemically dis-valuable, but also, more subtly, motivations for things like easy beliefs, comfortable beliefs, or to believe whatever will help you fit in with your own group (2014: 62-65; 2016a: 105), all ways of organising one's epistemic affairs in ways that do not attempt to track what is in fact true or justified.

At first glance, the picture of vicious motivation advanced by the presence conception is a perfect mirror-image of the responsibilist picture of virtuous motivation as set out in Chapter 1: the vicious agent is ultimately motivated by epistemic bads, and this grounds a set of proximate motivations characteristic of a particular vice. In fact, the story is not quite so straightforward, in a way that is already suggestive of an interesting disanalogy between virtue and vice. Prominent responsibilists, as we have seen, think that the epistemic goods that serve as the ultimate ends of our virtuous traits must be sought for their own sake. Whilst I distanced myself from some aspects of this view, I do agree that the virtuous agent cannot view epistemic goods as merely instrumentally useful for the fulfilment of some other goal. However, setting aside the occasional epistemic rebel, it is likely that motivations towards the kinds of epistemic bads that *ex hypothesi* characterise the vicious agent (easy beliefs, comfortable beliefs, and so on) *are* generally instrumental. The ultimate epistemic end of an epistemically vicious motivation, that is, will itself often be grounded in a deeper, non-epistemic motivation: someone who is motivated to believe things that help her sustain her own privilege, for example, will be concerned not with the false beliefs in and of themselves, but with the sustenance of her own privilege[21]. That a motivation for epistemic bads is itself

[19] Battaly also sometimes analyses intellectual vices on a model with Aristotelian moral vices (Battaly 2014). This, too, would encourage a view of vice as requiring the presence of bad motivations, since as we saw in Section 2.2 she reads Aristotle as providing an account of the vicious as having an incorrect conception of the good.

[20] At times Battaly suggests that other blameworthy psychological features, notably a faulty conception of the epistemic good, might also be sufficient to ground vice (2014, 2016b). However, her examples of people with a faulty conception of the good are generally people who take some set of epistemic bads to be good, such as people "caring too much about upholding the party line or upholding the views in which he is already invested" (2016b: 210). Accordingly, this is really another way of specifying the same motivational approach: these people are motivated by epistemic bads, they just don't realise it.

[21] Both Mills (2007) and Medina (2013) offer important discussion of such cases of 'active ignorance'.

only adopted as instrumentally useful for some other end, however, does not make its adoption merely instrumentally problematic; desiring the bad says something bad about you as agent, whether or not you actually attain these ends[22]. Consequently, we can set this complication aside. Going forward, I will continue to focus on the presence conception's picture of the vicious agent's *epistemic* motivations, their ultimate end in this sense being the acquisition of some set of epistemic bads.

The types of motivation discussed here are familiar and, surely, vicious. However, the presence conception does not provide a general account of the psychological structure of intellectual vice, since it overlooks cases of vice where people simply fail to be motivated by the epistemic good, or to even take it into consideration. Consider, for example, what I referred to in my earlier taxonomy of vice as vices of initial motivation (which includes traits like laziness, incuriosity, and certain forms of cynicism) and focus (thoughtlessness, negligence, and so on). A striking character who embodies many of these vices is Ilya Ilyich Oblomov, the eponymous protagonist of Ivan Goncharov's classic novel (1859). Oblomov is presented as a parody of a lazy young nobleman, who is almost totally incapable of making any decisions or undertaking any actions. Consequently, he spends much of the novel confined to his bed. His indolence is not something merely physical, however; it extends to his intellectual life even within the confines of his room, to the extent that at one point Goncharov notes that even when Oblomov tried thinking "he could not make up his mind what to think of first" (*ibid*.: 24).

One way that Gabriele Taylor, who introduces Oblomov as a paradigm case of sloth, makes sense of such a character is that "as far as he can see there is nothing on offer worth making an effort for" (Taylor 2006: 20). Oblomov, in other words, is simply uninterested in any form of intellectual engagement with reality. This is, I think, intellectually vicious in an extreme way. At the very least, he is a limit case for laziness and incuriosity, deeply engrained character traits that are inhibitive of attempts to acquire epistemic goods, that reflect badly upon him, and that would make us think less of him *qua* epistemic agent. However, on Taylor's reading certainly, these traits are motivated not by an active desire to avoid knowledge or to remain ignorant, but by an utter indifference to the two. That is, he is not vicious on account of any bad ultimate ends that guide his epistemic life; he is vicious because he has no epistemic ends. This is an extreme case, but a multitude of more mundane and localised examples, of the kind that populate the virtue epistemological literature, also fit this model. The scientist who does not care enough about her work to rerun experiments, the negligent detective who overlooks clues because she was not paying attention, and the friend who refuses to try anything new because 'I know what I like and I like what I know' all plausibly count as intellectually vicious not because of what motivates them, but because of what fails to.

[22] This is a point that Hurka (2001) also notes: willing the suffering of innocents, say, is intrinsically bad even if you only wish to use that suffering as a means to some end.

Some might reject the claim that agents who simply fail to take the right epistemic ends are vicious, arguing instead that we should keep 'vice' as a term to describe only the worst intellectual traits and that this class includes the traits that involve actively bad motivations, not the mere absence of good ones. This thinking is perhaps implicit in Roberts and Wood's contention that the absence of a love of knowledge is a (presumably mere) immaturity, whilst an actual aversion to knowledge is a vice (Roberts and Woods 2007: 168-169). Of course, we do want to be wary of moralism here. At least in the sparse picture I have sketched, Oblomov's vices are largely self-regarding, and consequently he is probably not deserving of the same level of criticism or reaction as, say, the type of actively ignorant privileged agent mentioned above. However, as a general stance this strikes me as an unhelpful way of thinking about vice, not least because this just does not seem to be how paradigm vices like laziness and negligence work much of the time[23]. Epistemic agency is not something one can simply opt out of, since epistemic activities of some sort or another are vital for a good human life. At the very least, we would want to say that in light of these particular traits Oblomov is unable to flourish *qua* epistemic agent and therefore *qua* human. The inability of the presence conception to accommodate such cases should be a decisive mark against it.

3.2 The Absence Conception

The fact that the presence conception cannot explain the viciousness of people like Oblomov, along with the more mundanely lazy, apathetic, or thoughtless, represents a serious difficulty for this analysis of vice. An appealing move might therefore be to argue that the kind of defective motivational state that characterises vice is not necessarily the presence of bad motivations but, more broadly, the *absence* of *good* motivations. Epistemic vice will thus be a matter of failing to take epistemic goods, in certain appropriate cases, as one's ultimate ends. This is our second motivational approach to vice: the *absence conception*.

The absence conception will undoubtedly be messier than the presence conception. For a start, we need to accommodate the point, made forcibly by Hurka, that in addition to indifference and opposition to the good, sometimes being only mildly for the good can be vicious too. We also need to consider the point, addressed in different ways by both Hurka and Adams, that it is surely not right that *any* failure of motivation for the epistemic goods is vicious. This point is particularly acute when it applies to non-epistemic traits – the traits that characterise me as a tennis player, for example, are not ultimately motivated by epistemic goods, but that presumably does not make them epistemic vices – but there is more to it than just that. As Adams suggests, given that we are limited creatures we should not be expected

[23] I also do not think it is right that being motivated by the bad always makes one a worse agent than failing to be motivated by the good. As Adams (2006: 42-44) argues, whilst we might want to say that malice generally speaking is worse than indifference, minor cases of malice (for example, a small amount of schadenfreude) are not as bad as extreme cases of indifference (such as the ruthlessness of a warlord).

to be motivated by every epistemic good at hand. We thus need a non-*ad hoc* way to determine which failures of motivation are problematic, and which are not. Adams is probably right to suggest that we should not expect anything as simple as an algorithm that will enable us to do this.

For argument's sake, however, I shall assume that these difficulties are surmountable, and that vice as the absence of a contextually appropriate concern for epistemic goods is a *prima facie* viable position to take. Indeed, its ability to accommodate both actively bad motivations (since if one is motivated by the bad one is thereby not motivated by the good) and those of people, like Oblomov, who simply do not care for the epistemic good means it is an intuitively more plausible position than the presence conception[24]. It is therefore unsurprising that this understanding seems to underpin much responsibilist thinking on vice, with Zagzebski, Montmarquet, and Baehr all gesturing at something like it[25]. Montmarquet, for example, identifies intellectual character vices with a "characteristic failure to attend to truth or truth-related considerations"; even if there is more to a given vice than just this, he claims it is the "lack of effort that is blameworthy" (Montmarquet 2000: 138-139). Similarly, in his paper on epistemic malevolence, Baehr claims that all vices share, and at least partly derive their viciousness from, "either a straightforward lack of desire for knowledge or an insufficient concern with knowledge relative to other goods" (2010: 209). This, he explains, is why epistemic malevolence is the epitome of intellectual vice: it takes this lack of desire to the extreme in the form of an outright opposition to epistemic goods. Finally, whilst Zagzebski's contention that a "defect of motivation" serves as the "primary object of criticism" in vice is ambiguous between the presence and absence conceptions, her stipulation that people can be criticised for a "lack of motivation for knowledge" suggests that she is probably more sympathetic to this broader motivational approach (1996: 207-209).

Nonetheless, this account also fails to capture all the ways in which an agent can be intellectually vicious. That is, there remains an important, and indeed common, type of vicious agent who does not conform to this psychological structure, people who exemplify intellectual vices even though they actually are ultimately motivated by epistemic goods. This

[24] I do not intend to suggest that vices can be neatly divided into absence and presence vices: forms of laziness, say, may well be characterised by the active desire for an easy life, not a passive disinterest. There are also plausibly traits that straddle the divide, such as Frankfurt's bullshitter (2005). The essence of bullshit, Frankfurt argues, is a straightforward lack of concern for the truth of what one is saying. However, if we reflect on actual cases of bullshit we observe, as Frankfurt does, that it often manifests itself in the service of self-aggrandising motives.

[25] Like almost all virtue epistemologists, each of these theorists focus primarily on virtue, and none elaborate upon vice in any great detail (one exception being Baehr's [2010]). This picture has thus been pieced together from various suggestive comments that each has made. Whilst I therefore do not take any of them to necessarily be committed to the details of this account, I nonetheless think the picture they indicate is highly significant, given these theorists' influence within virtue epistemology and the paucity of actual developed and avowed vice theories.

possibility is attested to by a number of familiar character types. Consider, for example, some shortcomings in Galileo's intellectual character, as highlighted by Roberts and Wood:

> As brilliant and productive a scientist as Galileo Galilei was, his work was impeded by his arrogance… His sense of intellectual superiority led him to disregard the work of other scientists who disagreed with him, and the incorporation of which could have improved his own work. He overestimated the probative force of his arguments for heliocentrism, and thus underestimated the justification of those who hesitated to accept his hypothesis. (Roberts and Wood 2007: 254)

Galileo's towering intellectual achievements were undoubtedly made possible only by a significant degree of intellectual virtue. However, no one's character is blemish free, and his dealings with other scientists paint the picture of an archetypal arrogant genius, keenly aware of his own intellectual superiority and thus closed-minded in his dealings with others. As Roberts and Wood note, this imposed an epistemic cost even for someone like Galileo.

Next, consider another recognisable (although on this occasion fictional) character type, drawn from the world of politics. Let's call him Dave. Dave was born into a wealthy family, who sent him to the best schools and finest universities in the world. He was always cognisant of the extent of his privilege, although rather than keeping him grounded this awareness merely bestowed upon him a flawed understanding of what constitutes an intelligent and reliable person. He thus believed that the only people worth listening to were people who, like him, had received a high level of formal education, had studied the relevant issues, and could articulate their position through reasoned and dispassionate argumentation. When he moved into politics, therefore, it was with people like this that he surrounded himself. Like Galileo, Dave was closed-minded, but he was also prejudiced, partial, and a snob. Consequently, when he came to decide whether to implement a policy that would disproportionately harm members of a marginalised social group he discounted their concerns about the extent of the damage, listening instead to a team of advisors who downplayed the potential costs.

Both Dave and Galileo bear, to varying degrees, the hallmarks of intellectual vice. However, it is by no means clear that their ultimate ends are the problem. That is, we can expand upon these examples with plausible stories in which Galileo was genuinely committed to his intellectual endeavours and Dave was a well-intentioned politician who truly wished to ascertain the impact of his policy; indeed, stories in which both engaged in their intellectually vicious acts precisely because they thought doing so would see them attain valuable epistemic goods. Roberts and Wood's analysis suggests that Galileo's arrogance was grounded in his sense of intellectual superiority, that it was his belief that he was the most brilliant person working on these issues, combined with a desire to get to the truth, that led him to (wrongly) conclude he would be better off not listening to lesser intellects. Similarly, Dave surrounded himself with people from backgrounds like his own precisely because he wanted an informed, reliable answer, and he had grown up to believe that such people will

always be the people to provide one[26]. The motivational approach would thus require that we exonerate them for their failings as epistemic agents. If vice requires not being appropriately oriented towards epistemic goods, and Dave and Galileo are appropriately oriented, then they are not vicious.

This, I think, is the wrong result, although the reason for this is not simply that they both had epistemically unreliable or damaging character traits, since this is not always a reliable guide. Consider, by way of helpful comparison, a character introduced by Quassim Cassam (2016): Oliver the gullible conspiracy theorist, who has a genuine desire for truth but who is led astray on the internet. Cassam argues that, despite his good motivations, Oliver's gullibility still constitutes an intellectual vice, since it is a trait that produces bad epistemic effects: it reliably impedes responsible and effective inquiry. Other readings of Oliver's character are possible, however. Consider, in particular, Cassam's suggestion that Oliver might just be "generally the kind of person who is easily conned" (*ibid.*: 163). Reading between the lines here, a fairer assessment might be that Oliver is the 'kind of person' who lacks the cognitive talents or skills necessary to discern reliable sources of information: that, in other words, he suffers from a cognitive deficiency more readily associated with a lack of intelligence than with a flaw of character. The language of virtue and vice, as I am using it, is distinctive and normatively strong: vice is more than simply an inability, it is a fault or flaw. If Oliver's gullibility, whilst reliably damaging in the way Cassam indicates, is simply a fact about his cognitive capacities that operates below the level of his beliefs, motivations, attitudes, and desires – if he is trying to ascertain the truth but just is not cut out for it – then this language does not seem warranted[27].

So I am not supposing that acting in epistemically harmful ways, even if they are reminiscent of certain intellectual vices, is always indicative of intellectual vice. Dave and Galileo are different from Oliver, however. Theirs are not deficiencies in cognitive capacity, but rather complex dispositions involving acquired commitments, values, beliefs, sensibilities, and so on. They also reveal things about the kinds of people they are: that Dave only sees a very small portion of society as truly worth listening to, and that Galileo saw himself as without epistemic peers. Unlike 'my' Oliver, we might also say that, given their faculties and opportunities, they probably *should* have been able to see why conducting their inquiries as they did was problematic, and thus they are potentially blameworthy for not doing so. In other words, these are precisely the traits that an account of the agential vices

[26] We might suspect that they acted in this way only because of a prior failure to be sufficiently motivated by the epistemic good, which led to them forming these problematic beliefs. I will consider this explanation in Chapter 4, but for now it is worth remembering that ascriptions of vice are not assessments of one's overall character, but rather of particular aspects of it. The question at hand, then, is whether Dave and Galileo are intellectually vicious at this point, in this respect. If vice requires inappropriate motivations, then we would be forced to say no.

[27] I will offer a fuller discussion of consequentialist vice theories, and Cassam's view in particular, in Chapter 3.

should look to accommodate. By failing to explain the viciousness of such cases, this second version of the motivational approach is also inadequate.

3.3 A Broader Motivational Approach?

What I have shown over the previous two sections is that the three ways of being oriented towards epistemic goods are all consistent with forms of intellectual vice. First, some intellectually vicious agents are, as the presence conception highlights, motivated away from epistemic goods, or towards epistemic bads, as in the case of people who ultimately just want to believe whatever is easiest. Second, as acknowledged by the absence conception, some are indifferent to epistemic goods, as in the case of Oblomov's lack of interest in the world. Finally, there are those who, like Dave and Galileo, are genuinely motivated by epistemic goods yet nonetheless still warrant the ascription of epistemic vice, a possibility captured by neither form of motivational approach. Given this diversity in intellectual vice, any theory that grounds vice in a particular orientation towards epistemic goods, as the variants of the motivational approach do, cannot be successful.

At this point, the motivational theorist might attempt a reply. Hitherto the discussion has focussed almost exclusively on the ultimate epistemic ends of particular traits, and specifically on an agent's orientation towards epistemic goods. However, earlier I noted that there are two parts to intellectually virtuous motivation – proximate and ultimate ends – and I have also suggested that the same is true for vicious motivation. Even if no single orientation to a set of ultimate ends can capture the diversity of intellectual vice, it also seems undeniable that each of the agents I have discussed have proximate motivations that go wrong in some way: they are all motivated by the proximate ends that are characteristic of vices like closed-mindedness, arrogance, and so on. Perhaps the conclusion we should draw, then, is not that we should reject the motivational approach, but that we should broaden it. Could intellectual vice be a matter of defective motivation at the level of either proximate or ultimate ends?

There is something to this thought, as I shall develop in Chapter 4, but as presented it is too simplistic. To see why, it will be helpful to remind ourselves why theorists adopt the motivational approach in the first place. As we saw in Chapter 1, responsibilist virtue epistemologists conceive of intellectual virtues as a distinctly personal or agential form of excellence. They afford a central role to motivation in the form of a positive orientation towards epistemic goods because it is the excellence of such an orientation that grounds the excellence of virtue. Similar thinking, we have seen, underpins the motivational approach to vice. The role motivations are taken to play here is to ground the appropriate dis-value in the agent: recall Battaly's remarks that vices inherit their dis-value from their 'dis-valuable motives', and Zagzebski and Montmarquet's suggestions that the primary object of criticism and blame in vice is a defect of motivation. The vicious agent's ultimate orientation towards

epistemic goods take centre stage in such accounts, in short, because it is this orientation that makes vices bad.

Proximate motivations alone cannot play this crucial value-conferring role. The main role for proximate motivations in a theory of virtue is to connect the agent's evaluative orientation to the world. They themselves do not constitute a form of intellectual excellence since they are, in a sense, value neutral. Many proximate motivations are, in fact, things that can feature in the psychology of both the virtuous and the vicious agent. Consider, for example, the motivation to call an inquiry to a halt at a given point. This is something that we will likely have to do on a regular basis, and that can be virtuous (as when we have enough evidence) as well as vicious (as when we have an inkling about what we will discover and do not like it). What the motivational approach purports to provide is an explanation of *when* halting an inquiry is vicious; namely, it is vicious when it is grounded in an inappropriate orientation towards epistemic goods[28]. A focus on proximate motivations alone cannot play this same role in explaining when, and on account of what, people are intellectually vicious.

4 An Asymmetry Between Virtue and Vice

I have argued that the motivational approach, which identifies viciousness with some inappropriate orientation towards the epistemic good, is inadequate as a comprehensive theory of intellectual vice. This is because it fails to explain the viciousness of people who are motivated by the epistemic good, but who go about their inquiries in ways that are problematic in precisely the agential way that is a feature of intellectual vice. The upshot of these arguments, combined with the orthodox picture of virtue as requiring good epistemic motivations, is that we are left with an overlooked but fundamental asymmetry between virtue and vice. Whilst, for the reasons discussed, it makes sense to think of the virtuous agent as characterised by a particular motivational state, the same cannot be said for vice. A particular orientation towards epistemic goods is necessary for an agent to be intellectually virtuous. However, whilst certain such orientations might be sufficient for vice, such an orientation is neither necessary for, unifying amongst, nor characteristic of the intellectual vices. Virtue, in short, enjoys a psychological unity that vice does not.

Although hitherto unacknowledged, this asymmetry in fact follows straightforwardly from another central plank of the agential conception of virtue and vice: the idea that virtues and vices reflect upon their possessor, in a way that is generally filled out with the claim that

[28] Similarly, recall my contention that, despite his unreliability as an intellectual agent, Oliver's intellectual character is not flawed or problematic in a way appropriate for intellectual vice. This is at least in part, I suggested, because his unreliability is not tied in with deeper evaluative commitments and the like.

virtues are praiseworthy and vices blameworthy[29]. Certainly within Aristotelian and also Kantian traditions, it is generally accepted that for an agent to be personally praiseworthy for something they must do it purposefully and do it for the right reasons; we do not praise someone if it becomes apparent that they donated to charity only for self-serving reasons, or if they did so by mistake. As such, it is right to take a motivation for the good to be necessary for virtue. However, these standards for praise are more 'demanding' than our standards for blame; we generally *don't* make an analogue of the motivation requirement for blame[30]. That is, whilst defective motives might be sufficient for blame, they are not necessary. We would blame someone who purposefully steals from the charity, but we may also blame someone who does so unwittingly, helping themselves to change from a collection box whilst negligently not appreciating what it was.

Blame's catchment area is, in fact, quite broad. People can be blamed for things they do negligently, for which they are culpably ignorant, that were foreseeable but unintended consequences of their actual goal, and so on. Zagzebski herself has suggested that there is a presumption of blame and responsibility for character traits that are reliably harmful: if one acts in a way that is epistemically damaging then one has a responsibility to acknowledge this and correct it, with subsequent failures to do so only increasing the blame due (Zagzebski, 1996: 208; see also Montmarquet 2008). Similarly, the intuitive thought underpinning our assessment of Dave and Galileo as vicious was that they 'should have known better'; that they did not, and that despite their capacities and the opportunities available to them they both thought they were acting in epistemically appropriate ways, speaks badly of them as epistemic agents in the deep, normative way required for an ascription of an agential vice. We do not need to locate an inappropriate orientation towards epistemic goods to make this judgement. In fact, I suspect that considerations like this ground blameworthiness for a range of character traits that far exceeds, in both type and quantity, those beneficial character traits for which people are praiseworthy.

5 Conclusion

The motivational approach to intellectual vice maintains that people are intellectually vicious just if their traits involve some inappropriate orientation towards the epistemic good. I have suggested that the widespread support this analysis enjoys owes at least as much to its fit with a popular understanding of the nature of intellectual virtue as it does to its actual explanatory power. Whilst it accounts for the viciousness of an important class of agents, it is also possible to outline characters who appear to be intellectually vicious despite their taking epistemic

[29] Whilst I have advocated broadening out the class of relevant reactive attitudes, I focus on praise and blame here for ease of reference.

[30] This echoes the claims made separately by Russell and Pettit, as noted in Section 2.1, that standards of good and sainthood are more demanding than standards of evil.

goods as their ultimate ends. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will consider two ways in which we might try to broaden our understanding of intellectual vice to accommodate this.

Whilst the motivational approach was the focus of my discussion in the second half of this chapter, the more over-arching theme has been the relation between virtue and vice. As we have seen, the inversion thesis, according to which virtue and vice are characterised by the same, if opposing, features, has played a powerful role in shaping theorising on the topic of vice, within both ethics and epistemology. My intention in this chapter has not been to reject the underlying idea that virtue and vice are opposites, since as I have repeatedly noted there is a sense in which I accept this is trivially true. However, I have also tried to demonstrate that symmetry in their more general or formal features – that virtues are praiseworthy and vices blameworthy, say – does not automatically translate into symmetry in their more structural or substantive aspects. Where too heavy a reliance on symmetry inhibits direct or focussed attention to vice, we risk missing out on the interesting and important ways in which the two can come apart.

The inadequacy of the motivational approach, then, serves as a cautionary tale about the role of the inversion thesis within vice epistemology more generally. Whilst the flourishing literature on intellectual virtue over the past two decades should provide a helpful resource when theorising about intellectual vice, we need to be careful in where exactly we draw the lines of symmetry between the two concepts. We should not presume that every feature, or even every important feature, of one will find a straightforward corollary in the other.

3

Consequentialist Vice Theories

In the previous chapter I argued for two main conclusions: one methodological, one more substantive. The methodological conclusion was that, even if we use a particular picture of virtue as our starting point when developing a theory of vice, it is nonetheless important to assess the merits of a theory *as it applies to vice* on its own terms. In particular, we should not uncritically assume that any given feature of a theory of virtue, no matter how central, will transfer straightforwardly to a theory of vice. With this principle in the back of my mind, I now want to focus more directly on the ramifications of the other, more substantive conclusion, concerning the nature of vice itself. This was that the prevailing orthodoxy within character-based virtue epistemology, according to which intellectual vice requires some inappropriate orientation towards epistemic goods, is too narrow to provide a comprehensive theory of vice. The obvious question to ask at this point concerns what should take the place of, or supplement, the motivational approach. What makes a trait intellectually vicious, if not the quality of the motivations that underpin it?

One tempting response to the difficulties faced by the motivational approach might be to shift attention away from facts about the agent who possesses a given trait, and instead to focus more directly on facts about the trait itself. After all, one aspect that came to the fore in discussion of the various counter-examples that were levelled against the motivational approach – and indeed, that could be seen in many of the examples that it *did* capture – was that they were all epistemically *harmful*. They were all traits that produced bad epistemic consequences, be it for the agent who possesses that trait, for their broader epistemic

community, or both. What's more, we have also seen, in Chapter 1, that in addition to a focus on epistemic motivations a number of virtue epistemologists (for example, Zagzebski 1996; van Zyl 2015) have also identified a success condition on intellectual virtue; specifically, that for an agent to be intellectually virtuous they must actually bring about the epistemic goods at which they aim. Accordingly, we might wonder whether what accounts for the viciousness of Dave and Galileo's characters is the simple fact that, whilst they had the right ends, their inquiries were reliably unsuccessful or counter-productive. More generally, perhaps what makes a character trait intellectually vicious is not any psychological feature of the agent, but rather the negative effects it produces in the world.

In this chapter, I will examine the views of two theorists who have defended a consequentialist position along these lines: Julia Driver, and Quassim Cassam[1]. In the background to this discussion, although not itself subject to critique, will be the family of views known as virtue reliabilism, which represents the most familiar strain of consequentialist virtue epistemology[2]. As I mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, I take the account of virtue and vice provided by reliabilists to be of a fundamentally different sort from the kind of account I am interested in. The main focus for reliabilists such as Ernest Sosa (2007) and John Greco (2010) is developing a notion of virtue that can be used to make progress on the classic questions of analytic epistemology, such as those pertaining to the nature of justification or of knowledge. Their resulting theories of virtue tend to focus primarily upon whether a particular trait or quality is reliably conducive to the production of true beliefs or not. A quality's reliably producing true beliefs is undoubtedly an excellence of some form, and I have no principled objection to using the term 'virtue' to describe this excellence. However, it is an excellence that, if it is a feature of some character traits[3], is shared equally with qualities like 20:20 eyesight, a good memory, or powers of deductive reasoning. This is very different from the kind of agential excellence at the heart of responsibilist virtue epistemology, according to which the character virtues represent a

[1] I will not discuss a disjunctive view, in which traits are intellectually vicious either if they involve bad motivations, or if they produce bad effects. There are three reasons why I choose not to. First, no theorist has, to my knowledge, defended such a position. Zagzebski, who we have seen adopts a mixed view of virtue, seems to focus only on motives when it comes to vice (Zagzebski 1996: 207-209). Battaly (2014) has defended a view in which there are vices that involve bad effects and vices that involve bad motives, but she takes these to be two different kinds of vice. Second, and relatedly, such a view would face the difficulty of reconciling two distinct types of value, instrumental and agential, into the account of one type of trait, a difficulty that Baehr has highlighted for mixed accounts of virtue (Baehr 2011: 132-138). And third, whilst (to put a gloss on the discussion to come) there will be some discussion of whether consequentialist views are too narrow, the more serious issue will be whether they are too broad. Incorporating a motivational element may help with the former, but it will do little to offset worries about the latter.

[2] Although reliabilism is often credited as a form of epistemic consequentialism, whether it in fact qualifies as a consequentialist view depends on how we define consequentialism. For discussion, see Ahlstrom-Vij and Dunn (2017).

[3] Setting aside the issue of whether any *given* trait is conducive to the acquisition of true beliefs, the question of whether it makes sense to even speak of character traits as furnishing us with beliefs is at the heart of the division between responsibilism and reliabilism. Some reliabilists (for example, Sosa 2015) resist the claim that they can do anything more than simply put us in a position to acquire true beliefs.

distinctive *kind* of virtue, one that reflects upon the agent in a deeper and more personal way than a judgement of mere epistemic reliability.

Turning from discussion of virtue back to discussion of vice, my stance on reliabilism is a similarly irenic one: reliabilist vice might be a form of intellectual vice, but it is a different, and normatively thinner, deficiency than that which characterises the agential conception of vice. The same cannot be said for the two consequentialist views that I will explore in this chapter, both of which are much closer to the agential conception of virtue and vice in their expressed aims, concerns, and emphases. This can be seen, for example, in Driver's attempt to limit the class of virtues to character traits, or in Cassam's desire to incorporate issues of praise and blame into his view. The question of whether a consequentialist analysis of the kinds explored can do justice to this agential conception of virtue and vice will be a central theme of this chapter. A big part of this, we shall see, is the question of whether these views can avoid collapsing into a form of reliabilism: views that may be theoretically consistent and practically useful, but that capture a different kind of viciousness from the kind I am investigating here.

In Section 1, I introduce the two consequentialist theories of vice that serve as the focus of my analysis: Driver's *character consequentialism*, which defines vices as character traits that either produce false beliefs or fail to produce true ones; and Cassam's *obstructivism*, which defines vices as traits that impede responsible and effective inquiry[4]. Sections 2 and 3 explore two difficulties that, I argue, afflict both views, albeit to different extents. In Section 2, I focus on the difficulty these views face in accommodating certain vices that do not appear to have a straightforward connection to the production of bad epistemic consequences (or, at least, the bad consequences these views appeal to). This difficulty is especially acute for Driver, given her comparatively narrow focus on the ratio of true to false beliefs produced by a given character trait. Whilst Cassam is less susceptible to this difficulty, it does raise questions about the nature of a responsible inquiry and the role this plays within his broader framework. In Section 3, I turn to consider more directly these accounts as providing an analysis of the agential conception of vice specifically. I argue that both views struggle to accommodate, in theoretically satisfying ways, certain components of this conception of vice, such as the idea that there is something distinctively bad about having a bad intellectual character, or that vices are typically blameworthy. Ultimately, it is this difficulty that leads me to conclude, in Section 4, that these views are, in their most plausible forms, closer to reliabilism than to an analysis of the agential conception of vice.

[4] 'Obstructivism' is Cassam's term (see his 2017b). 'Character consequentialism' is a term I have coined for Driver's view, for reasons explained in Section 1.1.

1 Vice Consequentialism

In this section, I will introduce the two analyses of intellectual vice that will serve as the focus for my discussion in the remainder of this chapter: Driver's character consequentialism, and Cassam's obstructivism. Both views are committed to a version of epistemic consequentialism, in which traits are evaluated according to the quality of the effects they produce. Beyond this, there are a number of significant differences between the two. I will focus here on what I take to be the most central, which is the kinds of consequences they appeal to in their evaluations. Driver, as we shall see in Section 1.1, assesses traits according to whether or not they are conducive to the production of true beliefs. Cassam, who I turn to in Section 1.2, argues instead that vices are traits that impede responsible and effective inquiry.

1.1 Driver's Character Consequentialism

In her work in both virtue ethics and virtue epistemology, Driver introduces a helpful distinction between two types of theorising. The first, which she terms *evaluational internalism*, refers to theories in which "the moral [or epistemic] quality of actions or character traits is determined by factors internal to agency, such as motives or intentions". This is contrasted with *evaluational externalism*, which picks out theories according to which this quality "is determined by factors external to agency, such as actual (as opposed to intended) consequences" (Driver 2000: 124).

In virtue epistemology, we have seen that most analyses of the intellectual virtues incorporate at least an element of evaluational internalism; they focus significantly, if not exclusively, on the quality of an agent's motives or other facts about their psychology. Driver, however, is wary of this approach. The problem, she argues, is that the pure internalist approach "dispenses with any connection between the agent and the world" and as a consequence the "agent's behaviour need have no actual implications for what occurs in the world" (Driver 2001: 80). It is at least possible, if we accept evaluational internalism, that someone might count as virtuous despite failing to do any good in the world whatsoever. This is a possibility Driver clearly takes to be unpalatable, and as a result she instead advocates a pure externalist model. According to her general framework, a trait counts as a virtue just if it is systematically conducive to the attainment of the 'ends' of a given domain. The relevant end in epistemology is, for Driver, true belief. As such, her definition of intellectual virtue is as follows: a "character trait is an intellectual virtue iff it systematically (reliably) produces true belief" (Driver 2000: 126).

There are a couple of clarifications to make about this picture of virtue, before turning to elaborate upon the corresponding view of vice. First, in her ethical work (and she

is clear that she takes ethical and epistemic virtues to be "structurally similar"; *ibid.*: 123) Driver rejects a commitment to a principle of *maximisation*, according to which virtues are a form of perfection and thus must produce the best possible consequences. Instead, she claims only that virtues are "character traits that systematically produce more actual good than not" (Driver 2001: 68). So, for epistemic virtues, this means they must simply produce more truth than falsehood. Second, she argues that the effects that are relevant to the analysis of character traits are *type* effects, rather than particular effects, and that "the effects of the trait need never be actually produced *in a particular instance* for the trait to count as a virtue" (*ibid.*: 74). What matters is that the individual character trait constitutes a disposition to produce a certain type of good effect, not that it in fact does or that it does every time it is exercised. Thus, she accounts for the fact that people can have a virtue that they never exercise, and that a character trait can be virtuous even if in a particular instance it does not produce good effects.

Driver does not offer an explicit definition of intellectual vice, although besides her general commitments to consequentialism there are some indications of the picture she has in mind. First, she advocates a consequentialist conception of *moral* vice, claiming that moral vices are traits that "produce bad states of affairs" (Driver 2001: 74) and that "maliciousness is a vice because it normally or systematically leads to bad effects" (*ibid.*: 67). Second, she claims that modesty, which she identifies as a disposition to unwittingly underestimate one's own worth, might be both a moral *virtue* and an epistemic *vice*, since whilst under-estimation will lead to various goods for oneself and others it also involves systematically making mistakes in one's self-assessment (Driver 2003: 372). Third, she is also generally sympathetic to the inversion thesis, at one point taking the presence of a potential asymmetry with vice as a mark against a particular theory of virtue (Driver 2001: 107). It thus seems fair to assume that Driver endorses an account of intellectual vice that runs in parallel to her account of virtue. As we saw in Chapter 2 there are two ways of understanding this inversion relation: either that vices actively produce epistemic bads ('mistakes', as Driver puts it, or false beliefs), or that vices simply fail to produce the epistemic good of true beliefs. Nothing much in what follows hangs upon which path she would in fact opt for at this juncture, but for ease of reference I shall generally assume the former[5].

There are obvious similarities between Driver's account of vices as dispositions to produce false beliefs, and the reliabilist view of vices as epistemically unreliable qualities. However, whilst I have suggested that we can bracket reliabilism as simply focussing on a different conception of vice, I do not think Driver would accept our doing the same with her

[5] This also seems to be the position taken by most reliabilists. Goldman, for example, notes how belief forming processes are deemed vicious if "they (are deemed to) produce a low ratio of true beliefs" (1992: 278), and Sosa implies that qualities are epistemic flaws insofar as they have a "cost in truth" (1991: 242). There is, furthermore, good reason for them to define vice in this way. Given the wide variety of sub-personal traits and qualities that fail to produce true beliefs, any reliabilist identifying vice with the failure to produce true beliefs would face an even more acute analogue of the difficulty that confronted the absence conception of vicious motivation: how to rule out, in a non-*ad hoc* way, traits that simply have no relevance to the epistemic domain. For further discussion of such issues, see Battaly (2014).

view. For a start, Driver herself is clearly not interested in a conciliatory resolution of this form, since as we have seen she thinks evaluational internalist accounts of virtue are problematic on their own terms. What's more, throughout her work she also expresses a clear interest in the agential conception of virtue and vice. This interest manifests itself in a number of ways, such as in her claim of structural similarity between moral and intellectual virtues (2000: 123), and in her discussion of blame and related reactive attitudes for our epistemic defects (2003: 379). Most significantly, it comes across in her explicitly excluding paradigmatic reliabilist virtues like good vision from the class of virtues, since it "seems false" that perception is a virtue, and instead specifying that only character traits, like rigor and curiosity, can be virtues (2000: 124). It is for this reason that I refer to her view as *character consequentialism*, to distinguish it from less exclusive forms of consequentialism that would class things like good vision as virtues.

The majority of my critical discussion in Sections 2 and 3 will focus on Driver's positive argument, that a consequentialist criterion can provide a viable analysis of the agential conception of vice. Briefly, however, it is worth noting that the gap between the agent and the world that she appeals to in her negative argument, where she claims that evaluational internalism leaves it possible that someone can be virtuous despite not doing any actual good, is neither as big nor as problematic as she suggests. After all, it seems likely that someone with a genuine concern for epistemic goods and who meets whatever other psychological conditions that we might require for virtue will generally choose epistemic strategies that are at least apparently conducive to these goods[6]. If they fail in this pursuit then it will likely be the result of either bad luck or an epistemically inhospitable environment, and it is not obvious that these are factors that should hold much sway in our evaluation of someone's character.

Driver's view represents, in many ways, the most simple or straightforward version of virtue epistemic consequentialism. It focusses on one fundamental epistemic value, offering truth as a *prima facie* plausible candidate to fulfil this role, and evaluates all traits according to the extent to which they are conducive to this. I shall later suggest that this simplicity leaves her view acutely vulnerable to the difficulties explored, in particular, in Section 2. For now, however, I want to introduce a more sophisticated variant of vice consequentialism: the *obstructivist* vice epistemology developed by Cassam.

1.2 Cassam's Obstructivism

Like Driver, Cassam endorses a form of epistemic consequentialism in which "intellectual virtues and vices are… delineated as such by reference to their consequences" (Cassam 2016: 166). What sets his view apart from more conventional consequentialist analyses like

[6] Baehr (2011: 123-127) has responded to Driver at greater length along these lines.

Driver's[7] is the central role he affords, not to true belief, but to the notion of *inquiry*. Following Christopher Hookway, Cassam identifies inquiry – the attempt "to find things out, to extend our knowledge by carrying out investigations directed at answering questions, and to refine our knowledge by considering questions about things we currently hold true" (Hookway 1994: 211) – as the focus of our epistemic lives. What makes a trait a virtue or a vice is the consequences it has for the kinds of inquiries we conduct, where a successful inquiry is one that is both *responsible* and *effective* and an unsuccessful inquiry one that is irresponsible and/or ineffective. Intellectual virtues, therefore, are traits that facilitate responsible and effective inquiry, whilst intellectual vices are traits that impede, or *obstruct*, responsible and effective inquiry[8].

So, on Cassam's view, "the consequences that matter [for delineating virtue and vice] are consequences for effective and responsible inquiry rather than the consequences for the ratio of true to false beliefs" (Cassam 2016: 166). As I shall discuss in Section 2, incorporating the two evaluative criteria of responsibility and effectiveness helps Cassam circumvent some of the difficulties faced by Driver's more reductive account, although it also potentially raises some complications of its own. For now, however, I want to clarify precisely what it means to describe an inquiry as responsible and effective. Of these two criteria, the notion of an effective inquiry is arguably the simpler. As we have already seen, Cassam follows Hookway in defining inquiry as the attempt to find things out, to extend and refine our knowledge. What makes an inquiry effective, therefore, is simply that it succeeds in this endeavour. An effective inquiry is "an inquiry that is *knowledge-conducive*" (Cassam 2016: 166).

In defining virtues, in part, as traits that abet effective inquiry, and effective inquiry as inquiry that is knowledge-conducive, Cassam thus indirectly defines virtues as traits that are knowledge-conducive. Whilst this is obviously reminiscent of Driver's more conventional consequentialist picture, Cassam argues that there are some notable advantages in defining virtues by reference to knowledge, rather than to truth. This can be brought out by exploring the following variant of a 'new evil demon' style case, discussed by Cassam but originally introduced (as we saw in Chapter 1) by James Montmarquet:

> Let us assume that a Cartesian "evil demon" has, unbeknownst to us, made our world such that truth is best attained by thoroughly exemplifying what, on our best crafted current accounts, qualify as intellectual vices. Presumably, we would not

[7] There are other differences between Cassam's and Driver's views, although I take this to be the central one. A further difference, which will be the subject of discussion in Section 3, is that Cassam, unlike Driver, is open to the possibility that qualities other than character traits can count as vices.

[8] In later work Cassam suggests a potential departure from this view, defining vices as traits that "systematically obstruct the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge" (Cassam 2017b: fn.13; see also his 2017a). It is not clear whether this is simply meant to serve as a gloss on his full view – as we shall see, his notion of effective inquiry is indirectly explicated in terms of knowledge conduciveness – or whether it signals a more fundamental change in his position. Either way, I shall focus primarily on the picture presented in 'Vice Epistemology' (2016), which provides the more detailed and systematic elucidation of his view.

> therefore conclude that these vices are and have always been virtues. (Montmarquet 1987: 482)

Imagine the following two inhabitants of this demon-world: Ada Lovelace and her cousin, Ada Schmovelace[9]. Lovelace is conscientious in her epistemic conduct almost to a fault, and is generally speaking a paragon of what we would usually take to be intellectual virtue. Schmovelace, meanwhile, is lazy, negligent, uninterested in the world, and generally has most of the traits we would normally attribute to a vicious agent. Thanks to the machinations of the demon, however, this means that Lovelace is invariably led to falsehood, whilst Schmovelace finds herself acquiring a great many truths. This seems to pose a problem for Driver's view, since if all that is relevant to a determination of virtue or vice is the ratio of truth to falsity then it must, counter-intuitively, count Lovelace as vicious and Schmovelace as virtuous[10]. This is not the case for Cassam's view. Even if Schmovelace does acquire a great many truths, it seems unlikely that her believing many of these things will be *justified*, since in coming to believe these things she will characteristically do things that undermine justification, like overlooking contrary evidence or unfairly disregarding alternative explanations. If her traits do not normally lead to her acquiring justified beliefs, then they cannot lead her to acquire knowledge[11].

Cassam's notion of an effective inquiry thus already grounds some important differences from Driver's view, by allowing that traits can be vicious either by obstructing our attempts to acquire true beliefs, or by obstructing our attempts to acquire justified beliefs. The biggest difference from Driver's more conventional version of consequentialism, however, comes by way of the introduction of his second evaluative criterion: that virtues abet, and vices impede, inquiry that is not only effective but also *responsible*. It is this criterion that takes the evaluation of our inquiries, and thus indirectly our character traits, beyond a straightforward assessment of the kind of belief states to which they are generally conducive, and instead factors in some consideration of the actual shape of the inquiries themselves. That is, it is not just the *outcomes* of our inquiries that are relevant to the evaluation of our

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[9] I have changed the names from Montmarquet's own Galileo and Schmalileo in order to avoid confusion with my own example of Galileo, introduced in Chapter 2.

[10] I suspect Driver would be prepared to bite this bullet; at least, that is her response to a structurally similar counter-example in ethics, in which it is imagined that the disposition to stroke kittens on Earth is, unbeknownst to earthlings, somehow conducive to children on a distant planet suffering horrible injuries (Driver 2004).

[11] The implications of a switch to knowledge-conduciveness for Lovelace, who also fails to acquire knowledge, are less clear. Cassam's suggestion seems to be that whilst she may not be virtuous she also won't be vicious, since it is the demon, not her traits, who obstructs her inquiries (Cassam 2016: 167). This response, however, faces the tricky task of explaining under what conditions a trait is at fault, as opposed to the environment (Madison 2017). A simpler solution might therefore be to concede that in the demon world virtue simply isn't possible, although vice is, and that both Lovelace and Schmovelace are vicious for different reasons. Such a situation would be both extreme and tragic, but perhaps that is fitting for a demon-world. Madison objects that it would be "odd" that a being as powerful as the demon could turn virtue into vice but not the other way around (*ibid.*: 4), but I disagree. As I have argued in Chapter 2 we should not expect virtue and vice to work as mirror images in all respects, and the specific asymmetry here is consistent with the plausible thought that vice, in some ways, comes cheaper than virtue.

traits, but also the *manner* in which we conduct these inquiries, and facts about an agent's psychology as they do so. This point requires some clarification, lest it be read as contradicting Cassam's claim to be proposing a form of epistemic consequentialism. The claim here is not that virtues and vices themselves are delineated by the extent to which they are effective (which would be a fact about their outcomes) and the extent to which they are responsible (which would be a fact about the traits themselves). Rather, the claim is that virtues and vices are delineated by the extent to which they contribute to a particular type of inquiry, one that is both effective and responsible. That a given trait is generally conducive to a particular type of inquiry is a fact solely about the consequences of that *trait*, even if our evaluation of these *inquiries* cannot solely be reduced to facts about their outcomes.

Of course, the question this raises is what does it mean for an inquiry to be responsible. I will discuss this in greater detail in Section 2.2, but for now it will suffice to note that, much like his identifying an effective inquiry as one that conduces to knowledge, Cassam thinks that this is something we have a pre-theoretical grip upon. He explicates this notion as follows:

> A responsible inquiry is one that is guided by the evidence and recognizes the obligations that come with being an inquirer. These include the obligation not to be negligent and to exercise due care and attention in the investigation of the matter at hand. A responsible inquirer has a certain attitude towards the business of inquiry, knows what he is doing and has the necessary skills. (Cassam 2016: 166)

Virtues are traits that, at least in part, conduce to our conducting inquiries in this way: we are more likely to be guided by the evidence if we are open-minded, more likely to display due care and attention if we are patient, and so on. Vices like closed-mindedness or haste, conversely, are traits that obstruct our doing so.

2 Consequentialism and Narrowness

In Section 1, I introduced two consequentialist analyses of intellectual vice. Driver's character consequentialism defines vices as character traits that systematically produce false beliefs. Cassam's obstructivism defines vices as traits that obstruct responsible and effective inquiry. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine whether or not either of these views provide an adequate account of the nature of intellectual vice.

One test of the adequacy of a particular theory of vice is the extent to which it can account for and explain the viciousness of certain intuitive or paradigm vices[12]. In this

[12] I am broadly in agreement with Zagzebski's (1996: 86) contention that accommodating certain paradigm traits, including at least some of those that I discuss in this section, is a constraint on any theory of virtue or vice.

respect, it is to the credit of consequentialist views that there does appear to be a strong connection between many paradigm epistemic vices and the production of epistemic bads, like false beliefs. Certainly, it appears to be borne out by experience that sloppy people make more mistakes, overly credulous people end up believing lots of falsehoods, and people lacking in intellectual flexibility or perseverance come unstuck when confronting epistemic challenges. Furthermore, the cases that proved problematic for the motivational approach were all agents with epistemically damaging traits: Galileo's arrogance led him to overestimate the strength of his own arguments, whilst Dave's closed-mindedness and partiality ensured he failed to appreciate the likely impact of his policies.

Nonetheless, there remains problem cases for both accounts discussed here. There are some character traits that have only a weak connection with the production of bad epistemic consequences, yet that seem be epistemically vicious in spite of this. In Section 2.1, I will argue that Driver's exclusive focus on truth-conduciveness leaves her unable to accommodate some specific vices, and also, more generally, leaves judgements about the quality of our intellectual agency too contingent on facts about our environment. In Section 2.2, I turn to consider Cassam's obstructivism. Whilst Cassam's view is less vulnerable to these difficulties, demonstrating that this is the case does bring to light the extent of the work being done by his notion of responsible of inquiry. This, I suggest, may bring with it some of its own difficulties.

2.1 Truth-Conducive Vices and Uncertain Virtues

As far as the explanatory power of Driver's character consequentialism goes, there are two main difficulties. The first is that there are certain character traits whose apparent viciousness does not seem to be captured by reference to the ratio of true to false beliefs that they produce; certain character traits, in fact, that are plausibly vicious despite the fact that they are *not* generally conducive to false beliefs. Consider, by way of illustration, the following three examples:

> EPISTEMIC SELF-INDULGENCE: The disposition to desire, consume, or enjoy inappropriate epistemic objects, or to desire certain epistemic objects too much or too frequently (Battaly 2010).
>
> SNOBBERY: The disposition to make intellectual evaluations not on the basis of someone or something's actual intellectual merits, but instead on the basis of their intellectual status.
>
> NEGLIGENCE: The disposition to not expend due care and attention in the conduct of your epistemic activities.

The precise details of these descriptions are not centrally important, since I am not attempting to provide defensible necessary or sufficient conditions for the vices outlined.

Nonetheless, I do take it that each of these descriptions capture a plausible example of intellectual viciousness. Epistemic self-indulgence is the kind of character flaw possessed by the voracious gossip, who spends every waking moment prying into others' affairs either online or in person. The intellectual snob is the kind of person who chooses their books, educational institutions, or interlocutors solely by reference to their reputation. And we are negligent when we fail to take appropriate precautions in our epistemic activities, such as casting around for second opinions or pro-actively verifying our assumptions when the stakes are high.

These three vices pose a problem for Driver's view, since none of them has a particularly strong connection with the acquisition of falsehoods. As I shall argue in Chapter 5, there is very often some connection between something's being intellectually meritorious and its enjoying a high intellectual status. As such, whilst the snob will characteristically make evaluations on inappropriate grounds, this does not mean that their judgements will characteristically be wrong. The epistemically self-indulgent, meanwhile, may well acquire *more* true beliefs than those who are more discerning in their epistemic pursuits, since they aim at fairly mundane and trivial truths that are easily acquired.

What, though, about negligence? Is this not a trait that, by its very nature, entails that its possessor will leave themselves open to mistakes? Granted, in some cases the negligent, in failing to take appropriate precautions in their epistemic affairs, will end up acquiring a significant number of falsehoods. However, some of the most vivid illustrations of negligence are cases where an unexamined process or presupposition actually works perfectly adequately for an extended period of time, before some change in circumstances reveals its shortcomings. For one striking example, consider the assumption, prevalent in the early 21st Century but in hindsight highly dubious, that a Western European government would not let one of its major banks fail. The failure to critically examine this assumption in the specific context of the Icelandic banking sector had little by way of adverse effects for many years, as both private individuals and financiers concluded, rightly, that lodging their savings with Kaupthing or Landsbanki would be financially beneficial. Of course, the negligence and complacency that underpinned this thinking was catastrophically exposed in the wake of the 2007 financial crash. However, people had been negligent in the decade prior to the crash too, with little consequence. Intuitively, this negligence was problematic all along, even before it was found out. This is an insight that vice epistemologists – at least, those that are interested in the agential conception of vice – should look to capture, but that Driver's character consequentialism cannot straightforwardly accommodate[13].

That we sometimes get lucky and our lack of care does not come back to haunt us does not mean that there was nothing wrong with being negligent in the first place. This

[13] Recall that, for Driver, the relevant question in determining virtue and vice is not whether a character trait produces the most possible truth, but whether it produces more truth than falsehood. As such, whether people would have acquired more truths by being more diligent and questioning their assumptions is not directly relevant.

thought ties into the second difficulty that Driver's version of consequentialism faces. The vices just discussed are all examples of vices that, by their very nature, do not seem to have any straightforward connection to false beliefs. However, there is also a more general difficulty, that whether *any* given character trait actually is truth-conducive will likely depend as much on facts about the environment one finds oneself in, and on luck, as on the agent themselves. This is the case even with vices that, unlike those just discussed, we *would* expect to have some straightforward connection with falsehood. One dramatic instantiation of this point is the evil demon case discussed in Section 1.2, in which all the traits we think of as vices are rewarded by the demon with true beliefs. However, we are by no means reliant upon appeal to outlandish examples to make this point.

Take, for example, closed-mindedness, a "popular favourite" of vice epistemologists (Cassam 2017b: 20). It might seem obvious that closed-mindedness, defined as something like the disposition to not engage with or take seriously a range of different viewpoints and options, will generally not be helpful in attaining the truth, whilst open-mindedness, its virtuous opposite, will be. However, as Battaly (2017b) has recently argued, whilst closed-mindedness might have bad epistemic effects in the standard case, in suitably 'hostile' epistemic environments it can be beneficial, provided one already believes things that are true. Consider the experience of women who have come to believe, rightly, that their life choices are shaped and restricted in myriad ways by patriarchal structures, but who are incessantly exposed to the subtle (and not so subtle) insinuations that, as masters of their own destiny, any shortcomings in their professional lives are solely their responsibility. Given this combination of antecedently held true beliefs and a hostile environment, these women are better off (at least in terms of number of true beliefs retained) simply ignoring this possibility, rather than open-mindedly engaging with it. Of course, ignoring this possibility isn't necessarily closed-minded; some women might have come to the measured and presumably justifiable conclusion that it is not worth engaging with. However, the point is that even someone who *is* properly closed-minded – who is disposed so that she would never take seriously viewpoints that differ to her own, and is simply fortunate to rarely be exposed to one worth taking seriously – will be epistemically well-served by this disposition[14].

Further problem cases can be envisaged along the same lines. For example, one objection that has been used to reject a success condition on intellectual virtue is the fact that many of our intellectual luminaries actually got a great deal wrong. Wayne Riggs puts the problem as follows:

> I propose that any theory of intellectual virtue that does not clearly and definitively count the likes of Aristotle, Newton, Galileo, etc. as being intellectually virtuous does not capture what we mean by 'intellectual virtue'. These individuals (among

[14] In an epistemically friendly environment the vice on the other extreme of open-mindedness – credulity – could presumably also be truth-conducive. Although not identical with credulity, Zollman (2010) has argued that this is the case for conformity, at least on the individual level. It is also worth noting that the connection between truth and open-mindedness itself is, as Carter and Gordon have recently argued, similarly "fuzzy" (2014: 207). See also Kwong (2017) and Madison (Forth.).

> many others) are our exemplars of intellectual achievement and of intellectual virtue… And yet, as we now know, a great deal of Aristotle's science and philosophy was mistaken. It may even be that he was wrong about more of these things than he was right. (Riggs 2003: 211)

Aristotle's curiosity and inquisitiveness led him to examine and theorise about a great range of significant topics, and this surely is one of the aspects of his intellectual character that we find most admirable. And yet, he also lived in an age where the answers to many of the questions that interested him in science and philosophy were simply out of reach, even to the most exceptional intellectual agent. Hence, a great many of the beliefs that he attained through these traits ended up being false. Aristotle would surely have been a more reliable epistemic agent had he been more parochial in his outlook, concerned only with mundane issues in his immediate environment. Presumably, he would also have been a worse one.

2.2 Responsibility and Circularity

Cassam's view is less susceptible than Driver's to these problematic counter-examples. Part of the reason for this is his decision to focus on knowledge, rather than mere true belief, as the aim of our inquiries. As we saw in Section 1.2, Cassam thinks this is helpful in warding off some unpalatable conclusions in new evil demon cases, but this shift has ramifications for more mundane scenarios too. After all, whilst negligence might not necessarily be a barrier to truth, it may well be a barrier to justification, since it is at least questionable whether true beliefs that are premissed upon dubious and unexamined assumptions are justified. Similar points could be made concerning beliefs that arise from an exercise of intellectual snobbery, or that are only retained through closed-mindedness. Again, if these beliefs are unjustified, they cannot count as knowledge.

Ultimately, however, this shift to knowledge- rather than truth-conduciveness only goes so far. For a start, externalists about justification might want to argue that snobbish judgements *are* justified, since if the connection between intellectual status and intellectual merit is sufficiently robust then evaluations made on the basis of the former likely will be reliable. Furthermore, some of the other vices that I have introduced, such as epistemic self-indulgence or parochialism, all seem to lead to knowledge fairly straightforwardly. What this highlights is the significance of Cassam's requirement that our inquiries must not only be effective (which is a fact about their outcomes) but also *responsible* (which is a fact about psychological aspects of the agent's conduct). If Cassam's view is to fully avoid the difficulties posed by knowledge-conducive vices, and thus do justice to the wide array of ways in which we can be epistemically vicious, then it is important that his notion of responsible inquiry can account for the variety of ways in which our inquiries can be vicious even whilst not being straightforwardly ineffective.

Before assessing whether Cassam's introduction of this second evaluative criterion is up to the task, it will be worth making explicit a basic constraint he places on his notion of responsible inquiry: that how we explicate what it means for an inquiry to be responsible must not render his definition of virtue and vice circular. Say we were to define a responsible and effective inquiry simply as an inquiry that it "is conducted in the way that an intellectually virtuous person would conduct it" (Cassam 2016: 165). On the face of it, this isn't an obviously problematic suggestion; Lorraine Code, who first coined the term 'responsibilism' to describe character-based virtue epistemology, did so because of the close connection she saw between intellectual virtue generally and epistemic responsibility specifically, with the latter "a central virtue from which all others radiate" (Code 1984: 34). Defining responsible inquiry in this way, however, is not an option that is open to Cassam. If we define a responsible inquiry as one carried out in accordance with the epistemic virtues, then the claim that intellectual virtues contribute to responsible inquiry amounts to the claim that intellectual virtues contribute to the kind of inquiry undertaken by intellectually virtuous people. This position is clearly, and viciously, circular.

Cassam's solution to this difficulty is to claim that we have an independent grip on what it is for an inquiry to be responsible. The idea here is that, just as we need not define effective inquiry via any reference to the virtuous agent, since that an effective inquiry is one that leads to knowledge is something that is pre-theoretically comprehensible, we can also cash out the notion of a responsible inquiry in a pre-theoretical way. As we saw in Section 1.2, Cassam does so in the following terms:

> A responsible inquiry is one that is guided by the evidence and recognizes the obligations that come with being an inquirer. These include the obligation not to be negligent and to exercise due care and attention in the investigation of the matter at hand. A responsible inquirer has a certain attitude towards the business of inquiry, knows what he is doing and has the necessary skills. (Cassam 2016: 166)

Cassam's summary provides a fair and intuitive representation of what it means for an inquiry to be responsible. What's more, the inquirer it envisages will certainly be virtuous: they will be thorough, diligent, open-minded, and impartial where necessary. The question is whether a pre-theoretical notion of responsibility adequately captures the full range of ways in which our inquiries, and *a fortiori* our character traits, might be virtuous. For example, it does not seem that virtues of flexibility, like imagination, adaptability, or creativity – which in its more extreme forms might encompass what Roberts and Wood refer to as 'epistemic playfulness', which involves "letting [one's] mind go on outrageous creative wanderings" (Roberts and Wood 2007: 161)[15] – have much to do with an inquiry's being responsible. Nor, perhaps, do virtues of initial motivation, things like curiosity or inquisitiveness. Some of these, granted, are likely to be knowledge-conducive, yet if Cassam's account is that a virtue

[15] This is not, I think, exactly what Roberts and Wood have in mind, but a helpful example of epistemic playfulness might be the eponymous main character in Martel's *The Life of Pi* (2002), who invents a fantastical but unfalsifiable story of his time adrift at sea in a life raft to serve as an allegory for religious belief.

must contribute to inquiry that is both effective *and* responsible (and this is the most straightforward way of reading it) then this alone will not be enough to salvage the intuition that these count as virtues[16]. Even if this is not exactly Cassam's view – perhaps a trait can be a virtue if it tends to help effectiveness and simply does not promote irresponsibility – it remains at least an open question whether all of these traits do, in fact, count as knowledge-conducive (see, for example, Montmarquet's [1993] suggestion that creativity is not truth-conducive).

This point goes the other way too: that the language of *irresponsibility* does not always fit naturally with our vice ascriptions. One particularly acute version of this difficulty is false positives, people who are intellectually commendable despite the fact that there seems to be something irresponsible about how they conduct their inquiries. Code discusses this possibility as it pertains to intellectual mavericks, people like Nietzsche or Feyerabend whose virtue consists precisely a form of irresponsibility, the taking of "outrageous stances to keep the epistemic community on its toes, to prevent it from settling into complacency or inertia" (Code 1987: 55). Similarly, we might think that someone who is epistemically playful in Roberts and Wood's sense is not merely not being responsible; they are actually being irresponsible in some commendable way. Less dramatic but probably more common are the false negatives, vices that are neither obviously obstructive to the acquisition of knowledge, at least within certain environments, nor naturally or intuitively described as a form of irresponsibility. I am not sure, for example, that someone who limited their epistemic horizons to their very immediate environment would be described as irresponsible, and neither would someone who has Battaly's vice of epistemic self-indulgence.

Of course, Cassam could claim that his notion of responsible inquiry *does* incorporate all of these considerations. In addition to following the evidence, recognising their obligations, and exercising due care and attention, he might argue that the responsible inquirer is also someone who prioritises the most important epistemic goods, is flexible in their methodologies, is constantly open to and curious about new questions and inquiries, and is creative in their ways of approaching them. However, if we understand responsible inquiry in this way then the suspicion of circularity returns. The more we stretch our pre-theoretical notion of responsibility to accommodate the various different ways we can be virtuous and vicious, the more it feels like it is our views on intellectual virtue that are explaining responsible inquiry, not the other way around.

[16] Cassam does not directly address the question of how responsible and effective inquiry relate to one another, beyond suggesting that they are closely connected. However, as we saw in the discussion of the evil demon case, he does seem to suggest that a failure of *effectiveness* alone is sufficient for someone to not be virtuous.

3 Consequentialism and the Agential Conception of Vice

In the previous section I questioned whether either Driver's character consequentialism or Cassam's obstructivism could accommodate the full range of ways in which our character can be intellectually vicious. I raised some problem cases for Driver's view, which focusses exclusively on the ratio of true to false beliefs that a character trait produces, and also made the more general observation that the extent to which any character trait is truth-conducive will depend in large part upon the environment in which it operates. Cassam, I suggested, is less susceptible to these difficulties, although they do prompt questions about his notion of responsible inquiry and the weight it is being asked to bear within his account.

Ultimately, I do not suppose that these counter-examples will be too persuasive for someone who is not antecedently sceptical of a consequentialist analysis of vice, and there are some responses open to both Driver and Cassam. For a start, both allow that not every instantiation of a vice will have bad epistemic effects: for Driver, we have seen, what matters is the type of effect a trait generally produces, not those that it produces in a particular instance; and Cassam does acknowledge that his view might be better served by stipulating that vices are traits that "normally" impede successful inquiry, not traits that always do (2015: fn.7). These responses bring with them some of their own difficulties, but they may go some way to offsetting the force of some of these problem cases. Beyond this, it may not be too painful simply to bite the bullet on some of these examples.

Nonetheless, the discussion of Section 2 does help to initially motivate the ultimate conclusion of this chapter, which is that there is a fundamental mismatch between consequentialism and the agential conception of vice. At the heart of this conception of vice is the idea that there is something distinctively bad about having a bad intellectual character. This is a badness that reflects upon somebody as an agent, and that grounds a set of distinctly personal reactive attitudes. In focussing only on facts about the effects of our traits, not on their possessors themselves, consequentialism loses sight of this agent-centeredness. This is a point that is most keenly illustrated when, as in the cases discussed in the previous section, the vice in question does not actually produce bad epistemic effects, and the consequentialist is forced to maintain that the agent in question is not epistemically vicious after all.

In this section, I aim to bring out this mismatch between consequentialism and the agential conception of vice much more directly. I shall do so by focussing on the attempts that these consequentialist views make to accommodate some of the central features of this picture of the intellectual vices, such as the claim that there is something normatively different about having a bad character as opposed to other epistemic deficiencies, or that virtues are praiseworthy and vices blameworthy. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is the focus on features like these that differentiate the agential conception of vice from

normatively thinner conceptions, such as that found in virtue reliabilism. I shall argue that both character consequentialism and obstructivism lack the theoretical resources to make sense of these features, as manifested on occasion by their seemingly *ad hoc* proposals for doing so, at other times by an ambivalence towards the features themselves. As a consequence, I will suggest these views are best understood not as concerned with the agential conception of vice, but rather as something more akin to reliabilism. In short, whilst it is possible that they have identified theoretically consistent and practically useful types of vice, they are different kinds of vice from that which concerns us here. As before, I start with Driver's view, before turning to discuss Cassam in Section 3.2.

3.1 Why Character?

As I noted in Section 1.1, Driver's interest in the agential conception of vice comes out in a number of ways, including her discussion of blame and criticism and her suggestion of structural similarities between moral and epistemic virtues. Here, however, I will focus on her claim that only character traits can be virtues or vices. The crux of the difficulty she faces is this. In limiting virtue and vice to character traits, Driver clearly presupposes that there is something distinctive about having a bad intellectual character that sets it apart from, say, having bad eyesight, or being bad at mental arithmetic. However, it is hard to make sense of this distinctiveness on consequentialist grounds, since character traits are by no means the only type of quality or trait that can produce bad epistemic consequences. Driver's decision, in spite of this, to limit virtue and vice to these types of traits ends up feeling unsatisfactorily arbitrary.

A comparison with virtue responsibilism, as discussed in Chapter 1, might prove instructive here. Responsibilism, in a sense, just is the analysis of intellectual character; it is the analysis of the kinds of people we are, or can be, or should be, epistemically speaking. What responsibilists are looking for in an account of virtue is therefore a specific kind of trait: one that reflects upon its bearer as a person, that is more than just some ability or skill, but that is commendable or admirable. Character traits fit naturally with this picture, since these are the kinds of qualities that make us the people we are. They are deeply embedded, they encompass normatively rich elements like values and motivations, and they combine tendencies to think in certain ways, feel certain affective responses, and engage in particular patterns of behaviour. They also ground the kind of agential value in which responsibilists are interested, since good character traits tell us something about the *person*, not just about their conduciveness to some external value. Other kinds of trait can be ruled out because they simply do not fit with this picture. 20:20 vision might be good, but it is so only in an instrumental way, in that it produces epistemic goods. It does not affect in any direct way how we evaluate someone *qua* intellectual agent: an intellectual villain can be keen-sighted just as readily as an intellectual hero.

Consequentialism does not have this same natural fit with character. Focussing once more on vice, it is possible to observe all sorts of different qualities and traits, from traits of character to faculties, deficiencies in intellectual skill to hard-wired cognitive biases, that give rise to false beliefs or fail to produce true ones. If all sorts of qualities and traits produce bad epistemic consequences, however, it would seem to follow, on a consequentialist analysis, that all sorts of qualities and traits can count as epistemic vices[17]. If the character consequentialist does wish to rule out these other types of trait, then they need to provide grounds by which to do so. If they do not, then the suspicion will be that they are not really accounting for what is distinctively bad about having a bad character, but tracking a different, more general kind of badness that they simply limit to character traits in an *ad hoc* way.

Driver, it is worth noting, is aware of this concern. In her initial discussion of intellectual virtue she does acknowledge that limiting her account to character traits, and thus excluding qualities like perception from counting as virtues, is potentially "ad hoc" (2000: 126), although she does little to address this difficulty here. She has more to say on the issue as it pertains to *moral* virtue in *Uneasy Virtue* (Driver 2001), where she considers the objection that, if what makes a trait a virtue is merely that it produces good consequences, smelling nice might count as a virtue on account of its tendency to ease social interactions. To get around this difficulty she opts not to change her criterion for virtue, but instead to draw a "weak" connection between virtue and the will, one according to which virtues need not involve a special and laudable *type* of willing (such as good motivations), but must nevertheless be qualities *of* the will in some form (Driver 2001: 106-108). She draws this connection by way of the not unreasonable claim that it is only beings who are capable of performing intentional actions, or capable of willing, who can possess moral virtues. She then seems to take this to entail that it is only qualities actually of the will that can count as virtues, before drawing a further connection between qualities of the will and qualities of the mind, "since minds and wills go together" (*ibid.*). Smelling nice, she concludes, might be good-producing, but because it is not a quality of the mind it is not a virtue.

Let's grant the various premisses of this argument, and also grant that this line of reasoning transfers to the epistemic domain, an assumption that perhaps underpins her claim in a later paper that we should restrict the category of virtues not to character traits but to "mental qualities" (Driver 2003: 376) [18]. This would still not justify a conclusion that only character traits can be intellectual vices. It may well disbar a number of epistemically harmful traits, like having a poor diet and bad eyesight, from counting as vices, but it still seems to leave question marks over things like innate or genetic intellectual incapacities or weaknesses (ranging from poor memory to entrenched cognitive biases) and rusty or faulty intellectual

[17] A comparison with virtue reliabilism is again relevant. Reliabilists have no principled objection to counting character traits as virtues, provided they do actually furnish us with beliefs (see footnote 3 above) and they are reliable. Their point, however, is that they are the same kind of virtue as good eyesight.

[18] Again, the reasoning behind this move comes across as somewhat *ad hoc*. She discusses how the incorporation of a motivational requirement for virtue allows us to exclude intellectual faculties, but notes that this aim "could also be accomplished by simply restricting the class of virtues to mental qualities" (Driver 2003: 376).

skills (like having a poor grasp of mental arithmetic). Driver's stance on such qualities is not totally clear. Whilst character virtues like curiosity and open-mindedness remain central to her analysis even within this later work, and she continues to exclude mere faculties like eyesight, she also frequently refers, loosely, to 'intelligence' as an example of an intellectual virtue. The more of these alternative types of trait she takes her virtue theory to incorporate, however, the more it begins to look like her view collapses into a relatively straightforward variant of reliabilism. The more *that* is the case, the more willing I am to take the same conciliatory attitude towards her view that I took towards reliabilism. This is that Driver and I are interested in two perfectly valid, but fundamentally different, types of intellectual evaluation: a normatively thick agential evaluation on the one hand, and a comparatively thin reliabilist evaluation on the other.

Driver's version of epistemic consequentialism, in short, displays a tension between two different conceptions of vice. On the one hand, her interest is clearly in the agential conception of epistemic vice, as manifested particularly in her focus on the character vices as a distinctive kind of vice. On the other, she advocates an outcomes-based criterion of evaluation, and this naturally applies much more broadly than to character traits alone. Not willing to accept a collapse into a form of reliabilism, but unable to provide principled grounds to avoid doing so, her view in the end comes across as unsatisfyingly *ad hoc*.

3.2 Character, Praise, and Blame in Obstructivism

Similar tensions play out in Cassam's work, too. Whilst the bulk of this sub-section will consider his response to the same issue that proved so troublesome for Driver – namely, what kinds of traits can be vices – I shall first briefly address the most vivid illustration of this tension. This is Cassam's ambivalence to another core feature of the agential conception of vice: the claim that vices are blameworthy.

On a consequentialist conception of intellectual vice, we might expect the claim that we are blameworthy for our vices to, at the very least, shrink into the background. Whilst people may in fact be blameworthy for many of their damaging traits, there is no necessary connection between a quality's being epistemically harmful and its possessor being blameworthy for that quality. This is the stance taken towards blameworthiness by many virtue reliabilists (indeed, generally speaking the issue of blameworthiness simply is not on their radar), and in 'Vice Epistemology' it is one to which Cassam appears sympathetic. Discussing his core example, Oliver the conspiracy theorist, he notes that whilst we might be inclined to "deplore" his conspiracism, "we should also be willing to admit the possibility that he can't help himself" (Cassam 2016: 169). If we cannot be blamed for things over which we have no control, Cassam argues, then we should be open to the possibility that not all vices are blameworthy. In a later paper, however, he seems to change his position. Reaffirming the role for blame within vice epistemology, he argues that the description of

traits as epistemic vices "implies that they are blameworthy", since it is part of the nature of vice to be blameworthy. "Whatever the conditions for blameworthiness" he goes on to add, "epistemic vices must satisfy them" (Cassam 2017a: 3). The implication here is that, of all the qualities that impede responsible and effective inquiry, the epistemic vices are that subset for which we are blameworthy.

This apparent change of view on the blameworthiness of vices suggests that, much like Driver, Cassam is caught between two conflicting conceptions of vice. By first rejecting the notion of vices as necessarily blameworthy it seems like he is happy to endorse a fairly full-throated version of consequentialism, and adopt a normatively thin account of vice whose purpose is to capture a wider variety of different traits. By returning to the idea that vices are necessarily blameworthy, however, he appears to set his sights on the thicker agential conception. Again, this leads to problems for his account. All sorts of qualities serve to obstruct inquiry from being responsible and effective, so on what grounds does this external constraint on which of these qualities count as vices come in? If the claim that vices are blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible is central to our conception of vice, as it is on the agential conception and as Cassam latterly suggests, then identifying a consequentialist criterion that has no direct connection to blameworthiness before adding the latter as an external constraint seems like the wrong way to do things. More appropriate, surely, would be to focus on the kinds of features that entail blameworthiness or related reactive attitudes, and build our account of vice from there.

The second, perhaps less obvious, way in which this tension between two conceptions of vice manifests itself is, as with Driver, in Cassam's discussion of the different types of traits that can count as vices. This is less obvious because, on the face of it, he appears willing to acknowledge the broader purview of consequentialism and accept a more varied taxonomy of vices. Whilst he does devote the majority of his seminal 'Vice Epistemology' to the character vices, he also explicitly notes that not all vices are character traits (Cassam 2016: 160, 165). In later work, he affords things like 'attitudes' and 'ways of thinking' as central a place in his theorising as the character vices. He summarises the difference between these various types of trait as follows:

> Closed-mindedness is an epistemically vicious *character trait*, prejudice an epistemically vicious *attitude* and wishful thinking an epistemically vicious *way of thinking*. Closed-minded is something that a person might be said to *be*, a prejudice is something that a person *has*, while wishful thinking is what a person *does*. (Cassam 2017a: 3; emphasis added in the first sentence, retained in the second)

This discussion chimes with similar comments made in 'Vice Epistemology', where Cassam claims that, whilst closed-mindedness (which is a character trait) is "something that a person can be said to *be* or *have*… you can neither be nor have wishful thinking" (which is a way of thinking). You can, he concedes, be a wishful think*er*, but "occasional wishful thinking doesn't make you a wishful thinker" (Cassam 2016: fn.15).

It will be worth first trying to get a bit clearer on the distinction between a character trait and a way of thinking, before going on to show how expanding his taxonomy of vices in this way might prove problematic[19]. Cassam's second claim quoted above, that occasional instances of wishful thinking do not make you a wishful thinker, is not particularly helpful in this respect. Whilst Cassam is right about this, occasional instances of being closed-minded do not necessarily make you a closed-minded person, either. To argue otherwise would be to overlook the distinction, well established in virtue theory, between the possession of a particular virtue or vice on the one hand, and a mere act of virtue or vice on the other. One can act closed-mindedly if one responds to a situation in a way that meets all the conditions for closed-mindedness; if, as some people put it, they act as the closed-minded person would act (Zagzebski 1996: 246-253). One only has the trait of closed-mindedness, however, if they have a systematic and reliable *disposition* to think and behave in closed-minded ways. Similarly, a systematic and reliable disposition to engage in wishful thinking presumably would make somebody a wishful thinker.

More significant in differentiating ways of thinking from character traits, perhaps, is the claim that wishful thinking is something someone *does*, whilst closed-minded is something someone *is*. This point could still stand even if it is conceded that people can, in a sense, be wishful thinkers, since being a wishful thinker might simply be a tag given to someone who repeatedly does a certain thing, just as someone who repeatedly bites their nails is a nail biter. And, just as being a nail biter does not tell us very much about the kind of person one is, and would therefore not be a character trait, nor would being a wishful thinker. Whilst Cassam clearly thinks wishful thinking is more significant than biting one's nails, perhaps what he is suggesting is that wishful thinking is a mere cognitive act or a particular step taken in an inquiry, like jumping to a conclusion or failing to check contrary evidence (another one of the vicious processes he identifies in 2016: 160). Although still vicious, dispositions to perform cognitive acts like these are importantly different from character traits, since they do not reveal anything directly about the kind of person their possessor is.

If this is how we are meant to understand the distinction between a way of think and a character trait, however, I am not sure it is helpful for Cassam to class wishful thinking as a vice. Cassam's interest in epistemic vices is motivated to a significant extent by an interest in providing explanations for systematic ways in which our inquiries go wrong, from conspiracy theorising (Cassam 2016) to diagnostic mistakes in medicine (Cassam 2017a). We invoke epistemic vices to provide a distinctive variety of explanation of such phenomena, a *personal* explanation in which it is some fact about people *qua* individuals that accounts for

[19] For simplicity's sake, and because Cassam says slightly more about ways of thinking, I will set aside vicious attitudes for the remainder of this chapter. It is not entirely clear whether Cassam intends to use attitude colloquially, as a way of thinking or feeling about something, or in the more technical social-psychological sense, as a positive or negative evaluation of a particular object. If the latter, he may be invoking the work of Tanesini (see, in particular, her 2018), who argues that the virtues and vices of humility are (social-psychological) attitudes towards one's cognitive make-up and its components.

their beliefs or errors (*ibid.*). This can be contrasted with sub-personal explanations, which are explanations at the "level of brains and events in the nervous system" (Dennett 2010: 105). Explaining diagnostic error in medicine by appealing to hard-wired cognitive biases would be an example of a sub-personal explanation, since this explanation does not account for diagnostic error by positing anything about the particular doctors making these mistakes; after all, that is simply how our brains work. Explaining it by reference to wide-spread arrogance amongst doctors, however, would be a personal explanation, since it is something about these doctors specifically that is leading to their mistakes.

If one of the motivations underpinning vice epistemology is to provide a framework for qualities that could figure in personal explanations of people's beliefs, then the question is whether invoking somebody's ways of thinking, understood as their dispositions to perform certain cognitive acts, does provide an explanation of this form. Of course, the observation that someone jumped to a conclusion, ignored contrary evidence, or had been caught up in wishful thinking could provide an explanation for their belief that P, at least at some level. However, it would not be a particularly satisfying one. After all, a perfectly reasonable response to the claim that someone's belief that P was grounded in their ignoring some salient contrary evidence, particularly for someone seeking a personal explanation, would be 'Yes, but *why* did they ignore this evidence?'. The act of ignoring may have been the step in their reasoning that led to their believing that P, but there could be all sorts of explanations as to why it is they ignored it: they may have been closed-minded, or lacked intellectual flexibility, or were epistemically lazy or negligent.

Cassam may be happy to locate personal explanations at this level, at where it is people go wrong in their inquiries, not what it is about them that explains their going wrong in this way. However, this would expand the category of vices far beyond attitudes and ways of thinking. The step that leads someone to form a false belief might be their doing their sums wrong, for example. Being bad at mental arithmetic, plausibly, is a fact about someone at the personal level; our mathematical proficiencies, or lack thereof, are presumably not sub-personal qualities that are "built into human cognitive apparatus" (Cassam 2017a: 4). Similar arguments could be given for other cognitive skills, or perhaps even certain faculties like memory[20].

Cassam does not explicitly rule out the possibility that some of these other qualities might count as vices. Nonetheless, I think it illustrates another way in which his expressed view betrays a tension between two different conceptions of vice. On what strikes me as the most natural way of understanding a personal explanation, it does make sense to focus on facts about the kind of people we are, rather than the kind of things we do, since our doing

[20] This will depend, in part, on precisely what meat is put on the bones of the personal/ sub-personal distinction, and how faculties like memory are understood. Whilst someone's memory is plausibly built into their cognitive apparatus, it is also something that varies between people, that we can work upon, and that is not always either automatic or involuntary.

a particular act might itself be explained by all sorts of different personal factors[21]. Cassam may well be working with a different notion of personal explanation, one that accommodates ways of thinking as well as character traits. However, the full implications of this move might see our vice epistemology expand beyond ways of thinking and attitudes, to take in other types of trait as well. Again, the broader our taxonomy of intellectual vices becomes, the less this looks like an account of the agential conception of vice. Given the significant theoretical innovations Cassam's inquiry-based version of consequentialism makes, it would be too much of a stretch to describe it as collapsing, like Driver's, into a form of reliabilism. However, if he is happy for his taxonomy of vices to expand in this way, and also to allow that vices will often not be blameworthy, then we can nonetheless offer the same irenic resolution to him as offered to Driver and the reliabilists: that the form of viciousness he identifies is simply a different kind of badness from that which I am investigating.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted two difficulties that afflict both Driver's character consequentialism and Cassam's obstructivism. First, I argued that both views, but in particular Driver's, struggle to capture the badness of some important vices, including character traits like intellectual snobbery, parochialism, and even closed-mindedness. Second, and more significantly, I suggested that both views are better categorised as akin to virtue reliabilism than as accounts of the agential conception of vice. This is because, like reliabilism, they lack the resources to make sense of the central features of the agential vices, such as the idea that there is something distinctively vicious about having a bad intellectual character, or that vices are necessarily blameworthy.

At various points in this discussion, I have described these views as either akin to or, in Driver's case, collapsing into a version of reliabilism. It is worth emphasising that, in doing so, I do not intend to dismiss them as indistinct from reliabilism, and less still as inviable. Cassam's obstructivism, certainly, is a long way removed from conventional reliabilism in the theoretical framework it presents, and a concept of vice that is normatively thinner than the agential conception but that captures all the various different personal qualities that can impede inquiry will have practical uses that extend far beyond reliabilist accounts. In drawing this connection with reliabilism, my main purpose is to invoke the same conciliatory attitude I have taken towards reliabilism throughout this thesis: that whilst these views may have identified and put to work a valid form of epistemic badness, it is an instrumental badness more akin to sheer epistemic unreliability, rather than the distinctive agential badness that I

[21] This is also the level of explanation indicated in his discussion of Oliver the conspiracy theorist: "He ignores critical evidence *because* he is grossly negligent, he relies on untrustworthy sources *because* he is gullible, he jumps to conclusions *because* he is lazy and careless. He is neither a responsible nor an effective inquirer, and it is the influence of his intellectual character traits which is responsible for this" (Cassam 2016: 164).

am here investigating. They therefore cannot provide the supplement to, or replacement for, the motivational approach that we are presently seeking.

4

Bad Judgement

In the previous chapter I argued that neither Julia Driver's nor Quassim Cassam's versions of consequentialism provide an adequate account of the kind of vice I want to identify. Both views struggled to accommodate, in a non-*ad hoc* way, some of the central features of the agential conception of vice, such as the idea that there is something distinctive about the badness of having a bad intellectual character as opposed to other forms of epistemic deficiency, or that vices are typically blameworthy. Accordingly, I concluded that the most appropriate attitude to take towards these views is one of irenic disagreement: that they identify a form of epistemic deficiency, but it is not the kind that we are presently investigating.

As far as our pursuit of a more comprehensive account of intellectual vice goes, then, we are in much the same position as we were at the end of Chapter 2. Motivational theorists have identified one important form of agential viciousness; namely, the viciousness of having bad epistemic ends. However, they are not able to make sense of the apparent viciousness of people, like Dave and Galileo, who characteristically go wrong in their inquiries *despite* their genuine concern for epistemic goods. The task at hand remains to explain in what sense these figures are epistemically vicious. In this chapter, I will attempt to resolve this question. I will argue that motivational theorists have been neglecting an important form of vice: the viciousness of what I will call *bad judgement*. I develop my account of bad judgement by drawing upon the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. Within the Aristotelian virtue ethical tradition, the person with real virtue is someone who not only has good ends, but who also has an excellence in picking the right means towards these ends.

Applying this picture to virtue epistemology, I argue that certain deficiencies of practical wisdom – certain forms of bad judgement – can be constitutive of intellectual vice. I thus argue for a disjunctive view of the nature of intellectual vice: someone can be intellectually vicious either if they are disposed to take bad epistemic ends, or if they have an entrenched pattern of bad judgement.

My discussion in this chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 1 I pick up on Aristotle's claim, which is central for the virtue ethical tradition but that has been comparatively neglected by virtue epistemologists, that full virtue requires not just having good ends, but also having the practical wisdom to pursue these ends in appropriate ways. In Section 2 I then explore in more detail the significance of practical wisdom within Aristotelian virtue ethics. I draw upon Aristotle's discussion of the practical syllogism to highlight the respective roles played by the virtuous agent's good ends and their practical wisdom, and consider how this picture might be employed within virtue epistemology. Then, in Section 3, I turn to consider two ways in which practical wisdom might be deficient, distinguishing between mere natural virtue, where someone's cognitive capacities haven't yet developed to the point at which practical wisdom is possible, and bad judgement. I outline the notion of bad judgement as a form of vice here, before adding more meat to the bones of this account in Section 4, where I highlight some of the causes of bad judgement. In Section 5, I respond to some worries that may be raised about attempting to put practical wisdom to work in virtue epistemology in this way, before concluding, in Section 6, with a summary of my view of the nature of intellectual vice.

1 Virtue and Practical Wisdom in Aristotle

The central question I am looking to answer is what is it that might explain the viciousness of people like Dave and Galileo, given that there is nothing amiss with their ultimate epistemic ends? In light of the influence of Aristotelian virtue ethics over the development of modern character-based virtue epistemology, one thing we might consider is how Aristotle might have answered this question. Doing so provides us with a promising starting point: Aristotle's famous claim that virtues of character – what we would now refer to as moral virtues – are constituted by more than just the perfection of one's appetites or desires. They also, crucially, are dependent upon the exercise of the intellectual virtue of *phronesis*, or *practical wisdom.*

To explain Aristotle's views on practical wisdom and the role it plays within his virtue ethics, it will be worth briefly exploring what he has to say about the distinction between the character virtues and intellectual virtues more generally. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* this comes towards the end of Book I, where he presents his view of the soul as divided into two parts:

the rational, and the non-rational (or appetitive) parts (*NE* I.13.1102a)[1]. This distinction between two parts of the soul then grounds a distinction between two different types of virtue, since each part of the soul is perfected in different ways. So, we have the intellectual virtues, which are excellences of the rational part of the soul, and virtues of character, which are excellences of the appetitive part (*NE* I.13.1103a). These, Aristotle is keen to establish, are two very different types of trait. Not only are they excellences of different parts of the soul, but they are acquired in different ways (intellectual virtues can be taught, whilst character virtues come through practice and habituation; see *NE* II.1.1103a), and only character virtues are concerned with pleasure and pain (*EE* II.4.1221b-1222a)[2].

Given the emphasis Aristotle places on this picture of two different and mutually independent types of trait, it is striking how quickly he seems to undermine it. The first indication comes in his famous definition of character virtue, as a "state involving rational choice, consisting in a mean relative to us and *determined by reason* – the reason, that is, by reference to which the *practically wise* person would determine it" (*NE* II.6.1106b-1107a; emphasis added). Practical wisdom, as we shall see, is an intellectual virtue, but here Aristotle is building it into the very definition of the, supposedly distinct, class of character virtues. He goes further than this in Book VI, when he claims that possession of this one intellectual virtue is both necessary and sufficient for the possession of all the character virtues: "we cannot be really good without practical wisdom, or practically wise without virtue of character" (*NE* VI.13.1144b).

How and why Aristotle attempts to defend the combination of these two seemingly conflicting positions is a complicated issue, with the voluminous literature surrounding it, in Zagzebski's words, a "testimony to the patience of philosophers and their reverence for Aristotle" (1996: 212). Thankfully, it need not concern us here, since I am less concerned with the intricacies of Aristotle's own view than what it can teach us about the actual nature of virtue and vice. What I want to focus on is Aristotle's recognition that there is more to moral virtue than an appetitive excellence. Those who have only the appetitive excellence have, at best, what he describes as 'natural virtue', the kind of virtue we find in children or animals (*NE* VI.13.1144b). It is the acquisition of practical wisdom that makes for 'real', or full, virtue. The reason I want to use this claim as the starting point for my current proposal stems from what Aristotle has to say about the division of labour between character virtue and practical wisdom within full virtue. Whilst they are, in a sense, strictly symbiotic, as his statements about the unity of the virtues illustrate, he also clearly assigns them different

[1] References to the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) are to the translation by Crisp (2000). References to the *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*) are to the translation by Inwood and Woolf (2012). References to *De Anima* (*De. An.*) are to the translation by Ross (1961).

[2] None of these alleged differences are particularly compelling to the modern reader, as Zagzebski (1996: 137-159) has argued. Her observation that certain intellectual virtues share all the characteristics that Aristotle reserves for the virtues of character was a central step in the development of modern character-based virtue epistemology.

functions. As his most succinct statement of their respective roles puts it, "virtue makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things towards it" (*NE* VI.12.1144a).

I shall explore in more detail what it means to 'make right the things towards the aim', and how practical wisdom does this, in the remaining sections of this chapter. Before doing so, I want to briefly unpack this basic picture of (full) virtue that Aristotle provides us with, in which character virtue makes the aim right and practical wisdom the things towards it, and map it onto contemporary discussion in virtue epistemology. We can extract four different elements from Aristotle's dictum. (1) is what he refers to as 'the aim'. This is the goal that an individual is looking to achieve, a particular desire or wish that they have. (2) is the 'things towards the aim', or the means by which we pursue our ends. This, we can loosely characterise as the means towards their aim, or how it is they will achieve their desired end. Neither (1) nor (2) are distinctive of the fully virtuous agent, since all sorts of different types of people have aims and adopt means towards those aims[3]. The combination of (3) and (4), however, *are* characteristic of the fully virtuous agent. These are two excellences: (3), the excellence of taking the *right* aim; and (4), the excellence of finding the *right* things towards the aim. The first of these is virtue of the appetitive part of the soul, or character virtue, whilst the second is practical wisdom[4].

Contemporary virtue epistemology has tended to focus on three of these elements. As we saw in Chapter 1, there is near-consensual agreement amongst character-based virtue epistemologists about (1), that the proper aim (what I have been referring to as ultimate ends) of our epistemic lives is the pursuit of various epistemic goods, and also about (3), that virtue is at least in part a matter of standing in some appropriate psychological orientation towards these goods. There has also been extensive discussion of (2), the appropriate things towards this aim. This primarily takes the form of detailed accounts of various virtues and vices, or what I have been referring to as the proximate ends of the virtuous agent. Curiously, (4), the actual excellence that goes into *determining* the appropriate means towards a given end, has received comparatively little attention. This is not a state of total neglect. Roberts and Wood discuss practical wisdom at some length, affording it a "privileged place" in their virtue epistemology (2007: 305), and it also features in the work of Zagzebski (1996: especially 211-

[3] As we saw in Chapter 2, on at least one reading of Aristotle, the vicious agent *doesn't* have an aim, if this is understood as the conception of the good.

[4] This reading of Aristotle is somewhat controversial, since many theorists have taken practical wisdom to have a role to play in determining our ends as well. As Moss (2011) has argued in extensive detail, however, this alternative reading must overlook or reinterpret a vast array of textual evidence to the contrary (the quotation above, that 'virtue makes the aim right', is by no means the only place where Aristotle makes claims to this effect). The evidence offered in favour of this alternative reading, meanwhile, can be readily explained away. Moss' articulation of her view is compelling, and I borrow heavily from her work in this and the following section. Nonetheless, as I have already noted, my main interest here is not to provide a faithful representation of Aristotle's actual views on these issues, and nor even is it to defend a particular conception of virtue. I am broadly speaking sympathetic to a view of virtue of this form, but I introduce it here primarily because I think it is helpful in highlighting a particular form of vice. In keeping with my discussion of the inversion thesis in Chapter 2, I am open to the possibility that the actual structure of virtue may be different or more complicated than presented here.

231) and, to a lesser extent, Baehr (2012, 2013). However, unlike Aristotle (and potentially Roberts and Wood), neither of these latter theorists actually make practical wisdom, or something like it, a constitutive *part* of virtue. Zagzebski does not include it in her two-part definition of virtue, instead treating it primarily as a higher-order virtue whose main role is to coordinate and mediate between our various individual virtues, whilst Baehr's remarks are generally more speculative, about the kind of thing practical wisdom would be *if* it has a role to play in an account of virtue[5].

There are a number of factors that might explain this comparative inattention to the virtuous person's excellence in selecting the right means to their ends. Perhaps it is because, as I have indicated, modern virtue epistemologists tend to be more interested in modelling their theories on Aristotle's account of virtues of character than his account of the intellectual virtues[6]; hence, the focus on motivations. Of course, his definition of the former does include a reference to practical wisdom, but he does also have a confusing habit of using the term virtue *simpliciter* to refer both to *full* virtue (as we saw in his famous definition of virtue at *NE* II.6.1106b-1107a), which includes practical wisdom, and to the distinct *character* element of full virtue (as we saw in the claim that 'virtue makes the aim right'), which does not. Another reason for the peripheral role afforded to practical wisdom in virtue epistemology might be the whiff of circularity attending the claim that intellectual virtues are in part constituted by practical wisdom, which is itself an intellectual virtue; hence, perhaps, Zagzebski's claim that practical wisdom is a single higher-order virtue, rather than part of each individual. Whatever the explanation, it is notable that the cases that proved problematic for the pure motivational approach are cases where people, like Galileo and Dave, have the right ends but go about pursuing these in problematic ways. In other words, they have the right aim, but they choose the wrong things towards it. Perhaps reflecting in more detail upon the nature and function of practical wisdom can clarify where, and why, such people go viciously wrong.

2 The Practical Syllogism

It will be helpful to say a bit more about the role practical wisdom has to play in a theory of virtue, before turning to consider how it, or more accurately its deficiency, might augment

[5] Interestingly, both of these theorists incorporate other elements into their account beyond virtuous motivations, and a case could be made that in so doing they're acknowledging the need for a practical wisdom-like disposition. Zagzebski (1996) claims that the virtuous person will be reliably successful in achieving their aims, whilst Baehr (2013) thinks the virtuous person must reasonably believe their proximate ends are suitably related to their ultimate ends. Arguably, one of the things practical wisdom will do on the Aristotelian picture is give us reasonable beliefs about the efficacy of a particular course of action, and in so doing it will make us more reliably successful. However, it is these 'outputs' of practical wisdom that Zagzebski and Baehr make partially constitutive of virtue, rather than the excellence in arriving at these outputs.

[6] This, in turn, might be partially fuelled by suspicions about the adequacy of the moral/ intellectual split, as noted in footnote 2.

our understanding of vice. This former task will be the focus of the current section. I will concentrate primarily on Aristotle's work and those working within the Aristotelian tradition since, as we have seen, the specific role it plays within this tradition is particularly helpful for our purposes[7]. Nonetheless, I am less concerned with presenting or defending Aristotle's actual views than deriving a conception of practical wisdom that is both attractive and helpful when thinking about the intellectual virtues and vices. Accordingly, this is not primarily intended as an exegetical exercise.

One way to fix the respective roles of good motivations and of practical wisdom within virtue is to consider Aristotle's model of practical reasoning more generally. For Aristotle, all rational actions can be explained through the use of what is known as a *practical syllogism*. The practical syllogism depicts a chain of reasoning, explicitly modelled on the following form of reasoning familiar from theoretical deliberation:

MAJOR PREMISS: Mammals are warm-blooded.

MINOR PREMISS: Human beings are mammals.

CONCLUSION: Human beings are warm-blooded.

This represents a deductively valid argument, where the major premiss specifies an 'If *p*, then *q*' rule, the minor premiss notes that the thing under consideration is, in fact, *p*, and the conjunction of the two entails the conclusion, that the thing in question is therefore also *q*. Aristotle's insight was that this form of reasoning, as well as explaining how people come to hold certain *beliefs*, can also be used to explain one's practical reasoning; that is, why it is people *act* in a certain way. Consider the following example, that Aristotle himself provides (*NE* VII.3.1147a):

MAJOR PREMISS: Everything sweet must be tasted.

MINOR PREMISS: This piece of food is sweet.

CONCLUSION: This piece of food must be tasted.

As in the example of theoretical deliberation, the premisses of this 'argument' represent two beliefs, one of which Aristotle notes is "universal", in that it specifies a general principle, and the other of which "is concerned with particulars", in that it picks out a property of a specific object at hand. In both cases the conjunction of these two beliefs lead deductively to a third belief, such that "the soul must in [the theoretical] case affirm the conclusion, while in matters of production [practical deliberation] it must immediately act" (*NE* VII.3.1147a). In other words, just as in theoretical reasoning, where observing that a general principle is relevant to the specific case at hand should lead one to affirm the conclusion entailed by the general principle, in practical reasoning noting that a general

[7] Wisdom of some form was, however, prominent in a variety of other ancient virtue theories. See Kamtekar (2013) for a helpful overview.

principle is relevant to the situation at hand should lead one to act in a certain way. This schema applies to virtuous action as much as any other, although with a few added complications. I shall consider each premiss, and its significance for virtue, in turn.

2.1 The Major Premiss

I will start with the major premiss. As illustrated by the above example, the role of the major premiss is to provide the "motivating energy" for the actions it explains (McDowell 1979: 343). It provides an aim, "something of which there could be a desire" (Wiggins 1976: 40) or some other motivational state. Given that the role of (character) virtue is to make the aim right, we can fit it into Aristotle's more general framework of practical reasoning by re-describing character virtue as providing the right major premiss. Virtue makes the aim right, and this means giving the virtuous agent the right concerns or desires by which to guide their life (Moss 2011: 246).

Unlike with most examples of the practical syllogism, however, we should not expect the virtuous person's general principle to be able to be neatly (or even messily) articulated or formulated. Whilst Aristotle seems to take it that the major premiss of virtuous action is the virtuous person's conception of the good life or the chief good – in other words, that they act for the sake of what is good – it would be a mistake to think this could be reduced to some propositional content, of the same form as 'all sweet things must be eaten'. Such a principle, even an extensive and nuanced one that accommodated lots of different permutations, would belie the vagaries and complexities of human life, and there will always be unusual or unforeseen circumstances where it is found wanting. As John McDowell puts it, the virtuous person's conception of the good life is not something that can be codified:

> [T]o an unprejudiced eye it should seem quite implausible that any reasonably adult moral outlook admits of such codification. As Aristotle consistently says, the best generalizations about how one should behave hold only for the most part. If one attempted to reduce one's conception of what virtue requires to a set of rules, then, however subtle and thoughtful one was in drawing up the code, cases would inevitably turn up in which a mechanical application of the rules would strike one as wrong – and not necessarily because one had changed one's mind; rather, one's mind on the matter was not susceptible of capture in any universal form. (McDowell 1979: 336)

As McDowell notes, this is not to say that the virtuous person does not have a conception of the good life, and nor is it to say that this conception is only uncodifiable because it is forever fluctuating and changing. The point is that, for Aristotle, virtue isn't a matter of learning some articulable set of principles or guidelines; if it was then we could teach virtue, but Aristotle clearly states it is something that we first enter into through habituation, rather than tuition (Burnyeat 1980). Indeed, a reliance on rules and principles is a mark of someone who is, at best, *en route* to virtue, since it is the mark of someone who

lacks the flexibility and inventiveness to respond to subtle changes in circumstance. Rather, the virtuous person's conception of what is good or required is a matter of *seeing* situations in a certain way, of being attuned to the different demands that a situation might present. This is not something that is intelligible to someone who does not share this viewpoint.

I do not wish to dwell on this point, since it is the minor premiss that is more interesting in a discussion of practical wisdom, but to complete the virtue epistemological story it will be worth saying something about the major premiss for the intellectually virtuous agent. Given all that has been said before, it should be clear by now that this major premiss is what I have been referring to as the ultimate ends for the virtuous agent; in other words, it represents their concern for epistemic goods. It might be tempting to conclude, further, that this concern is not subject to the same complexities when it comes to codification as the morally virtuous agent's conception of the good. After all, that a concern for the epistemic good is required for the intellectual character virtues is a near consensual view. Furthermore, we do seem to have a firmer grasp of what kinds of things constitute the epistemic good than that which comprises the good life more generally, and there is likely to be more common ground when it comes to fleshing out a conception of the good or flourishing epistemic agent, both within and across cultures, than there is when explicating the concept of a good moral agent.

Nonetheless, this temptation should be resisted. The complexity and diversity of epistemic values, the different ways in which they can factor into our lives, and the different priorities and weightings they can be given all combine to make it just as implausible to imagine a set of epistemic guidelines that will capture one's ends or aims in every given circumstance as it is to imagine some such codification of the moral good. Even on the most parsimonious epistemic axiology, in which truth is taken to be the only fundamental epistemic value, there will still be two basic imperatives: to attain truth, and to avoid error. As William James (1896) famously argued, these are not two sides of the same commandment. One sure-fire way to avoid falsehood is to not believe anything, yet this is a stance that won't get you very far towards truth. Conversely, one could amass a great number of truths if one believed every possibility that popped into one's head, although one would presumably also end up with at least as many falsehoods. There are, of course, innumerable other ways of balancing the risk of error against the reward of truth, and which way to fall will in large part depend upon the situation one finds oneself in. Whilst there might be heuristics to draw upon – James argues that in 'forced' choices, where suspending judgement would come at a cost, it is reasonable to accept a higher possibility of error – any attempt to codify the virtuous person's system of values would have to be infinitely accommodating of their sensitivity to these variations

Perhaps, someone might think, this is not as difficult as I am suggesting: whilst not straightforward, it is nevertheless possible to codify in a precise way the balance that the virtuous agent strikes between valuing the attainment of truth and valuing the avoidance of error. Even granting this possibility, we saw in Chapter 1 that virtue epistemologists generally

construe the epistemic good as broader and more complicated than this, accommodating other relatively 'thin' values (knowledge, justification, understanding) as well as much 'thicker' ones (trust, diversity, significance). Consequently, for a codification to truly do justice to the virtuous agent's system of values it would also need to accommodate the weight given to these other epistemic ends, and how they balance them when they come into conflict. Furthermore, we also saw that the virtuous agent has other- as well as self-regarding concerns; they care about the epistemic good not only for themselves but also for others. Part of their disposition to characteristically take the right ends, then, will be their characteristically adjudicating issues concerning the appropriate distribution of these goods amongst potentially competing intellectual agents and groups[8].

For all the broad agreement amongst virtue epistemologists that epistemic goods serve as the ultimate ends for the virtuous agent, then, ultimately this term is just a placeholder for their actual system of values. It picks out a rich array of constituent values, and the truly virtuous agent will be attuned to many of these, and able to weigh them up and decide, at any point, which is the most appropriate one on which to focus[9]. This calculation will likely depend on facts both about the context and about the agent: the relevant epistemic goods might be different for a teacher than they are for an academic, for someone trying to decide which way to vote than for someone trying to decide the best route to the office. Any attempt to distil all these different sources of variation and indeterminacy into a single system of epistemic values that is comprehensible from beyond the intellectually virtuous agent's own perspective will be as likely to come unstuck in the face of unusual or unanticipated cases as a similar effort to try and codify the morally virtuous agent's conception of the good.

2.2 The Minor Premiss: Ethics

This appreciation of a particular aspect of the situation is what is depicted by the minor premiss. Briefly, the relation between the two is that whilst the major premiss sets our ends, and in so doing provides the motivational force, the minor premiss captures the recognition that this or that aspect of the situation is relevant to these ends. In so doing, it highlights a particular act or response as a means to those ends (c.f. Wiggins 1976: 40; McDowell 1979: 343). The major and minor premisses are thus constituted by different forms of knowledge: the major premiss by knowledge of some *general* principle or concern, such as a conception of the good life; and the minor premiss by knowledge of *particulars*, or an understanding of the facts of a given situation (*De An*. III.11.434a). The minor premiss, in other words, implies an appreciation of how particular aspects of a given situation relate to your general concerns:

[8] Coady (2010) has argued that such distributive issues are 'distinctively' epistemic, and not simply derived from more general principles of distributive justice.

[9] None of this need be a thought-out or conscious process, and often it won't be. This is a point I shall explore in the context of the minor premiss in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

someone with the general principle that they will eat every sweet thing notices a cake, which they recognise to be sweet, and they decide to eat it.

Practical wisdom is the excellence that enables the virtuous agent to consistently select the appropriate minor premiss (Moss 2011: 247). This much follows from what has already been said: practical wisdom is that which makes right the things towards the aim, and the function of the minor premiss is to pick out a means by which to pursue some end. So the difference between the person with real virtue and the person with mere natural virtue is that, in addition to having the right general ends, the person with real virtue will also have an excellent appreciation of particulars. They will be adept at reading situations and determining which aspects are most relevant for their concerns. Sometimes this will be a matter of engaging in consicous deliberation and thinking through the appropriate steps towards some end, but more often than not practical wisdom is simply a matter of seeing situations in a certain way. For the practically wise, certain considerations or aspects of a particular situation strike them as salient in a way that is missed by the merely naturally virtuous. They have become attuned to the morally relevant features of the situation; as Miranda Fricker has put it, they have learned to "see the world in moral colour" (2007: 72). It is this ability to appreciate this or that fact as particularly worthy of attention, combined with their more general aims, that motivates the virtuous person to act in a certain way.

To be clear, the point is not that we need practical wisdom in order to derive any minor premiss, nor even is it that we need it to hit upon, in any particular instance, the right minor premiss. The person with mere natural virtue, who has the right end but has not yet developed practical wisdom, will hit upon the right action occasionally. To borrow an example from Rosalind Hursthouse (2006: 302), we do not need to be especially wise to appreciate that, if a baby's head is slipping below the water in a bath tub, the right thing to do is to catch it. Perhaps the naturally virtuous will even get it right more often than not. However, not all cases are as clear-cut as the baby falling beneath the bath water. It is the mark of the practically wise that they *reliably* fix upon the right means in problem cases.

Sometimes the difficulty the practically wise are able to negotiate is that the appropriate act in a given instance is not the act usually, or pardigmatically, called for by a particular virtue. Bumping into a friend who has come up short at the bar, the naturally generous person might think it the good thing to do to offer to buy them their drink. If they were also practically wise, however, they might recognise that, on this particular occasion, to do so would deprive them of their own bus fare home, without which they would be stranded in town. As such, buying the drink on this particular occasion would be an act of prodigality, not generosity. Along similar lines, specific virtues will sometimes come into apparent conflict with one another. That is, situations will sometimes present themselves to us in which more than one set of concerns seem to pull us in different directions. On a separate occasion, the generous act may well be to buy your friend a drink, but the just one would be to hold onto your money to repay a different friend later on that evening. In situations like these the naturally virtuous person might be tempted to accede to the first concern that

springs to mind, or will simply be torn between the two conflicting courses of action. The practically wise will be able to mediate between these competing claims, and settle upon what is in fact the right thing to do. As in practical wisdom more generally, sometimes this will require a conscious process of deliberation, but often the practically wise will simply recognise that one consideration (specifically, the right consideration) is more relevant than another. As McDowell puts it:

> It is by virtue of his seeing this particular fact rather than that one as the salient fact about the situation that he is moved to act by this concern rather than that one… A conception of how to live shows itself, when more than one concern might issue in action, in one's seeing, or being able to be brought to see, one fact rather than another as salient. (McDowell 1979: 344).

In the example above, the truly virtuous person would not have to deliberate about whether to buy one friend a drink or pay the other one back. They would be aware that they owe the latter this money, so the thought of giving it to someone else simply would never cross their mind.

Practical wisdom, finally, will often go beyond simply knowing *what* to do. Sometimes, the relevant question is *how*. Even in situations where, in broad terms, what you should do is obvious – someone is in trouble, so you should help them – Aristotle emphasises that not only will the practically wise person do the right thing, they will also do it in the easiest and most 'noble' way (*NE* III.3.1112b). To borrow another example from Hursthouse:

> The small child on water wings drifts out of his depth into the river current, which bears him, with increasing speed, towards the weir. The onlooker with natural virtue immediately flings herself into the water and starts swimming after him. The onlooker with practical wisdom immediately starts running along the bank to get well ahead of the child before flinging herself into the water. (Hursthouse 2006: 302)

This example also helpfully serves the purpose of illustrating two respects in which the practical syllogism is an abstraction, even if a useful one. First, situations will often not follow a simple 'major premiss, minor premiss' structure. Rather, there will often be multiple minor premisses, or multiple aspects of the situation that strike the virtuous agent as salient and that help them to determine what it is they should do. Second, as has already been suggested, the practical reasoning of the virtuous agent is often not a matter of following through a formal reasoning process, as a literal reading of the practical syllogism would suggest. Rather, we are often called to react instantaneously to situations. The role of the practical syllogism is to explain why someone acted, and this is as much about reconstructing their process of reasoning as it is re-enacting it[10].

[10] This is also emphasised by McDowell, who reads Aristotle's discussion of deliberation "as aimed at the reconstruction of reasons for action not necessarily thought out in advance; where they were not thought out in advance, the concept of deliberation applies in an 'as if' style" (1979: fn.22).

2.3 The Minor Premiss: Epistemology

There are two elements needed to explain the virtuous person's act in this Aristotelian virtue ethical picture. First, they need to have the right major premiss. This requires a character virtue, which ensures they take the right ends. Second, they need to have the right minor premiss. This requires the development of practical wisdom, which enables them to select the appropriate course of action as the right means to this end. Whilst much of the work done in virtue *epistemology* has tended to focus on the first of these elements, practical wisdom and the ability to select the right minor premiss has an important role to play here too.

I won't spend too long on this point, as the basic outline of how this picture might work can be inferred fairly straightforwardly from the picture just presented for virtue ethics. The good motivations that have dominated discussion of intellectual character virtue to date can be re-described as supplying the virtuous agent with the major premiss of a practical syllogism, as we saw in Section 2.1. However, they also need to be able to select the right minor premiss, so they know how to act appropriately in pursuit of these more general ends. The capacity to reliably select the minor premiss is practical wisdom, what Roberts and Wood refer to as the "good judgment without which no human virtue could be exemplified in action, emotion, or judgment" (2007: 305). On occasion this might involve a conscious thought process, where they actively deliberate about what to do (or, as we have seen, how to do it). However, more often than not the practical wisdom of the virtuous agent refers to the fact that they have learnt to see the world in 'epistemic colour'[11]: they have a characteristic way of reading situations, such that they are alive to what are in fact the epistemically relevant features. Given their underlying concern for epistemic goods, these features will strike them as providing reasons to act[12]. Both aspects of their reasoning – the general concern for epistemic goods, and the acquired sensibility to the facts of particular situations – are required to explain their action, and explain its virtuousness.

Looking at a couple of examples of central virtues can help illustrate how this picture works in practice, and why it should be attractive. Take the virtue of intellectual humility, which a range of theorists have recently identified with the adoption of some appropriate pattern of attention towards one's intellectual qualities. One prominent example of this trend is the account offered by Whitcomb et al (2017)[13], in which humility is characterised as a stance taken towards one's limitations. This stance has two components: the intellectually humble person will be 'appropriately attentive' to their limitations; and they will 'own them', or respond to them in the appropriate way. It is the first part of this account

[11] I borrow this term, as in the moral case, from Fricker (2007: 71).
[12] As Roberts and Wood indicate, the mark of intellectual virtue is not only the propensity to act in the appropriate ways, but also to feel fitting emotional responses and make adequate judgements. When I speak of acts and action, as I do here, this should be understood broadly, to encompass these other elements as well.
[13] But see also Roberts and Wood (2007) and Tanesini (2018).

that is of particular interest for our purposes. What it means to be appropriately attentive to one's limitations, Whitcomb et al argue, is to be disposed to "be aware (even if just implicitly) of one's own limitations, for them to come to mind when the occasion calls for it" (2017: 516). In true Aristotelian fashion, this is a matter of hitting a mean between arrogance and servility, or obliviousness to and preoccupation with your limitations: "When life calls for one to be mindful of a limitation, then, and only then, will it appear on the ideally humble person's radar" (2017: 517). This can easily be understood in terms of just the kind of sensitivity that I have been discussing as practical wisdom. In certain situations it is appropriate to be aware of a particular weakness or shortcoming in one's cognitive capacities or skillset, and the mark of the intellectually humble person is that their limitations will appear salient to them whenever, and only whenever, this is the case[14].

The second example I will consider is curiosity, a trait that is crucial for both the initial launching and the sustenance of many of our inquiries. Curiosity, we can presume, is some form of desire for knowledge[15]. If, however, curiosity is to be a virtue, as many have argued it can be (for example, Baehr [2011] and Watson [Forth.]) it must surely be more refined than this. As Lorraine Code has rightly noted, we "hesitate to ascribe virtue to a voracious collector of facts" (1987: 59); someone who feverishly seeks out old phonebooks to build up a comprehensive repertoire of local phone numbers has some desire for knowledge, and can presumably be described as curious, but it at least feels odd to describe this person as virtuous[16]. The implication here is that virtuous curiosity must be more discerning than this: a desire for valuable truths, perhaps, or interesting truths, rather than simply a desire for truth as such[17]. One attractive way to make sense of this capacity for discernment, which seems to fit with the phenomenology of virtuous curiosity, is to think of the latter as just the kind of attuned sensibility that we have been discussing. Virtuous curiosity, in other words, requires developing a sensitivity to certain questions or inquiries, such that a range of issues strike the virtuously curious person as interesting or as worth pursuing that are different from those that would strike the less than virtuously curious person. Each might read the same newspaper article, but whilst the virtuous person's curiosity is sparked by an oddly compelling argument for a position they have never

[14] There is a further overlap between Whitcomb et al's account of humility and my two-part account of intellectual virtue. Whitcomb et al distinguish between humility as a character trait, and humility as a virtue. Humility as a character trait just is this appropriate attentiveness; it is a virtue when this attentiveness is displayed because the agent is motivated by epistemic goods (2017: 520). The *virtue* of intellectual humility thus contains just the same two components that I have been advocating.

[15] For a discussion of this view that wrestles with some important complications, see Whitcomb (2010a).

[16] See also Roberts and Wood: "Many propositions of which a person could have knowledge are, absent very special circumstances, of no interest whatsoever, so that a person who equally loved all of them would not thereby display virtue, but instead a weird intellectual pathology" (2007: 156). Zagzebski seems to dissent from this point of view, arguing instead that if an excessive desire for certain kinds of truths is a vice, it is a vice only because it detracts from other aspects of a morally balanced character (1996: 196-197).

[17] Such a view fits with Michael Brady's (2009) claim that it is wrong to argue that truth is valuable because it satisfies our natural curiosity, because sometimes our natural curiosity is aimed at truths that are not valuable.

considered before, the vicious person's curiosity is sparked by the brief mention of a politician's divorce following an extra-marital affair.

Although the major premiss, which sets one's general goals, and the minor premiss, which puts this into action in particular instances, are constituted by different kinds of knowledge, there is one important respect in which they are similar. Just as we could not reduce to a neat set of principles or rules the various concerns and priorities that govern that virtuous agent's conception of the good life, it would also be a mistake to try and do so with their understanding of how to respond to specific situations. This is a point that Fricker has compellingly made in her exposition of a virtue theoretical account of testimony:

> [T]he sheer range of contexts to which the ordinary human hearer needs to be sensitive in her credibility judgements is so vast, the contexts so finely differentiated by the innumerable prompts and cues relating to trustworthiness in different social contexts, that it is simply not realistic to think that any sufficiently complex codification will be available, or if there were such, that it could be any use. (Fricker 2007: 75)

As is the case with receiving testimony specifically, so is the case for our epistemic conduct more generally. The practically wise agent will likely, of course, have extensive propositional and practical knowledge, which will be both specific to the virtues (what the various virtues require, how they relate to their ultimate ends, and so on) and more broadly 'technical' (what kind of strategies are conducive to the attainment of their ends, how do they best put the virtues into practice)[18]. Some of this, furthermore, may well be formulable in terms of more or less rigid rules; rules of arithmetic, say, or rules of inference. However, there is no neatly articulable statement of how much verification is required for an agent to count as diligent, how much weight one can put on one's own achievements before it becomes arrogant, or in precisely which circumstances pursuing some inquiry in the face of external pressures counts as a case of courage or a case of rashness. Rules of thumb might capture the kinds of considerations that generally bear upon such calculations, but even the best generalisations, in the end, are just that. There is always the possibility that they will run up against individual cases that, because of some oddity of circumstance, do not fit with the general pattern of things. It is a mark of virtue, and of practical wisdom in particular, to be attuned to this.

[18] Hursthouse (2006) presents an account of practical wisdom in the moral case that meshes these two forms of knowledge together.

3 Deficiencies of Practical Wisdom

Thus far, my discussion in this chapter has focussed primarily on virtue. Specifically, I have noted Aristotle's recognition that virtue requires not only a reliable orientation towards the right ends, but also the practical wisdom to pick the right means towards these ends. I then sketched a picture of how this might work within virtue epistemology, where the virtuous agent displays not just the good ends on which virtue epistemologists have hitherto focussed, but also the good judgement to effectively pursue these ends. There is much more to be said about this picture, concerning, for example, the relation between practical wisdom and the unity of the virtues, or the question of whether practical wisdom is part of all virtues or a single, distinctive virtue. Such issues have been the subject of much discussion within ethics, and although some will resurface at various points over the remainder of this chapter it would lead me too far off topic to explore them directly here. Instead, I want now to turn our attention back to intellectual vice. Specifically, I want to explore the possibility that if the good judgement of practical wisdom is plausibly required for intellectual virtue, perhaps *bad* judgement has a role to play in an account of intellectual vice?

In this section, I will delineate two different ways in which agents can lack practical wisdom. In Section 3.1, I will focus on Aristotle's category of 'natural virtue', the state of people who, because of immaturity or incapacity, have not yet had the chance to develop practical wisdom. Such agents, I suggest, are not best described as vicious, because this failing of practical wisdom does not reflect upon them in any significant way. It is in Section 3.2 where, going beyond Aristotle's own discussion, I introduce *bad judgement*, or epistemic sensibilities that have been skewed or corrupted as they develop. It is patterns of judgement of this form, I will argue, that are constitutive of the elusive kind of intellectual vice that we are seeking.

3.1 Natural Virtue

As far is Aristotle is concerned, the main contrast with the practically wise is not the vicious but the naturally virtuous. As I have already alluded to, natural virtue is a state in which an agent has, perhaps from birth, the appetitive dispositions that are characteristic of virtue; they quite naturally desire that which the virtuous person desires, are repelled by what the virtuous person is repelled by, and so on. What marks them out from the person with *full* virtue, however, is that the latter, in addition to taking the appropriate ends, also has practical wisdom. Thus, the person with full virtue will characteristically get right the things towards these ends, whilst the naturally virtuous will often err in their pursuit. Recall Hursthouse's example, introduced in Section 2.2, of the two people diving into a river to rescue a drowning child. Whilst the merely naturally virtuous, upon seeing the child drifting helplessly towards

a waterfall, would dive into the river to swim after them, the truly virtuous would run along the bank to get ahead of them first.

This absence of practical wisdom is not the kind of thing we are looking for to augment our understanding of intellectual vice. Aristotle unequivocally associates natural virtue with immaturity and naïveté, depicting it as characteristic of "children and animals" (*NE* VI.13.1144b). He also repeatedly asserts that practical wisdom is something that we only acquire through experience, that "practical wisdom is concerned also with particular facts, and particulars come to be known from experience; and a young person is not experienced, since experience takes a long time to produce" (*NE* VI.8.1142a). In his eyes the naturally virtuous are not the wicked but the young and immature, those who were born with naturally good inclinations but who are yet to cultivate the knowledge of a good life that will help them to consistently act in appropriate ways. There is a deficiency of judgement here, in that their perception of saliences is not quite right. However, this is only because their character has not yet had the chance to fully develop.

We do not need to endorse Aristotle's account of natural virtue wholesale to acknowledge that he is picking out an important character type here, and one that arguably extends beyond the young and inexperienced. Consider, for example, our discussion in Chapter 2 of Oliver, the gullible conspiracy theorist who is "generally the kind of person who is easily conned" (Cassam 2016: 163). I suggested that one reading of Oliver's character, based on this remark, is not that there were any vices at work here, but rather that he simply lacked the cognitive capacities to determine what kind of informants or sources of information are reliable, and which are to be avoided. One of the basic premisses underlying this current investigation, and the field of character-based virtue epistemology more generally, is that there is distinction between a simple cognitive incapacity and the kind of personal failing that is constitutive of intellectual vice. There is a significant and normatively relevant difference between someone who goes wrong in the pursuit of their ends because the development of their judgement has been skewed towards an inappropriate set of considerations, and someone whose judgement simply has not been allowed to, or cannot, develop in the appropriate way.

3.2 Bad Judgement

More interesting for our purposes, then, are people who have had the opportunity and the capacity to develop practical wisdom, but whose judgement is impaired nonetheless. It is these agents that I intend to capture when I speak of bad judgement as a form of intellectual *vice*. In the remainder of this section I will articulate a view of what bad epistemic judgement looks like, and explain why it provides a helpful supplement to the previous focus on the viciousness of having bad ends. More detail will be added to this picture in Section 4, where I turn to consider some of the causes of bad judgement.

The main insight I hope to draw from the Aristotelian picture sketched in Section 2 is that our dispositions as inquirers are determined not only by the kinds of ends we take, but also by the ways we see fit to pursue these ends. By this, I do not mean the intellectual skills, capacities, or resources one has, but rather the habitual way in which they appraise situations, the ways in which they weigh up and respond to the relevant epistemic and non-epistemic considerations. As we saw with the virtuous agent, whilst sometimes this will be a conscious process of deliberation, more often than not these judgements will manifest themselves in the habitual way one has of seeing the world, in which certain features of a situation strike them as salient whilst others are passed over as irrelevant. So, the intellectually humble will bear in mind their limitations only when these limitations are actually relevant to the investigation at hand, the curious will be struck by some unexplained or unexpected phenomena that requires explanation, and so on. Those with *bad* judgement see the world in 'epistemic colour' too; they also have a characteristic perception of saliences when appraising situations. The crucial difference, of course, is the kinds of features these agents are attuned to. Unlike the practically wise, the person with bad judgement is *not* guided, in thought, feeling, and action, by a sensitivity to the epistemic requirements of a situation. Rather, their characteristic way of viewing the world is such that they perceive as salient factors that are either unrelated to successful inquiry, or else will actively lead them astray.

Returning to some of the vices already touched upon in this chapter will help to illustrate this point[19]. Take, for example, servility, one of the vices of humility discussed by Whitcomb et al. Whilst the trait of servility might sometimes be vicious in virtue of its being aimed towards bad epistemic ends – it is plausibly viciously servile, that is, to care only about pleasing others, at the expense of a concern for one's own epistemic well-being – Whitcomb et al's account of humility suggests that there might also be forms of servility whose viciousness instead consists in a defective pattern of attention. This is the servility of an inverse Galileo, someone who does care for epistemic goods but who is so stricken with self-doubt, or so over-awed by the superiority of others, that they think it is always best to accede to what other people say, since they themselves will probably be wrong. The humble, we saw, will be aware of their limitations only when the situation calls for it, but for the servile their own shortcomings will always be one of the most salient considerations. In much the same way, some of the vices of curiosity might also be put down to a deficiency in judgement. Code's 'voracious collector of facts', whose lack of any filter on their curiosity means they are constantly drawn from piece of trivia to piece of trivia, unable to sustain their attention in one direction long enough to pursue any meaningful inquiries, is a case in point.

Crucially, appealing to bad judgement can also account for the viciousness of the two anti-heroes of this investigation: Galileo and Dave. Drawing upon the tools outlined in this chapter, we can re-describe them both as agents whose deliberations are characterised by

[19] I will offer a more sustained example of a vice that can take the form of either a deficiency in judgement or a deficiency in ends in Chapter 5, where I provide an account of intellectual snobbery.

taking the right major premiss – their concern with epistemic goods is more or less the same as the virtuous agent's – but the wrong minor premiss. What was wrong with them, in other words, was the quality of their judgement, with both systemically led astray by their perception of saliences. Galileo was too keenly aware of his own intellectual pre-eminence and as a consequence the most pressing consideration for him, when weighing up the merits of a given theory or proposal, was always the extent to which it was compatible with his own views. Similarly, for Dave, when trying to work out whether someone could serve as a reliable informant his attention was habitually drawn to facts about their background or the style and eloquence with which they present their arguments. This led him to overlook more pressing considerations to do with, say, their experience or qualifications.

What these examples help illustrate, too, is that suitably entrenched patterns of bad judgement can comprise aspects of our intellectual character in just the fashion outlined in Chapter 1. That is, they are engrained psychological dispositions that partly make somebody the person they are, intellectually speaking. A pattern of judgement reveals the kinds of things one sees as particularly pressing, or relevant, or noteworthy, and can be invoked to explain and predict one's behaviour, affective responses, and modes of reasoning. Galileo's privileging of his own theories and Dave's dismissal of concerns raised by people are significant, and reprehensible, aspects of their intellectual character, and it is the quality of their judgement, rather than the quality of their ends, that explains this.

4 The Roots of Bad Judgement

In the previous section I identified a hitherto unacknowledged form of intellectual vice. I argued that, in addition to the viciousness of an agent's taking bad epistemic ends, there are certain vices that centrally consist in an agent's having a particular pattern of bad epistemic judgement[20]. Typically, bad judgement of this form is a matter of their coming to see the world or appraise situations in a certain way, such that their attention is drawn to misleading, unreasonable, or otherwise epistemically inappropriate considerations.

An important part of this discussion was a distinction I drew between bad judgement and mere natural virtue. Thus far, I have explicated this distinction primarily in terms of whether the traits in question are ones that we develop, or ones with which we are naturally endowed. Although I have noted the connection between natural virtue and inexperience, with the naturally virtuous for Aristotle those who are yet to acquire the knowledge of particulars that would enable them to put their good intentions into practice in specific situations, I have thus far said very little about how our experience of the world can shape

[20] These two categories are not mutually exclusive. They account for different ways in which we can be vicious, but as I shall discuss in Section 4.1, it is possible for one trait to be vicious in more than one way.

the quality of our judgement, either for better or for worse. Intuitively, this issue has some bearing on the question of whether patterns of bad judgement really reflect upon their possessor in the way necessary for them to qualify as intellectual vices. After all, I have followed Aristotle in claiming that natural virtue is not vicious, precisely because our immaturities and natural incapacities are not the kinds of things that reflect upon us in this way (at least up until a point).

My aim in this section is to render more explicit the processes by which our sensibilities are shaped in this problematic way. I plan to do so by focussing on the bad judgement of two types of people: those who display bad judgement in pursuit of *bad* ends (Section 4.1), and those who display bad judgement in pursuit of *good* ends (Section 4.2). My separating bad judgement into two categories like this is not meant to indicate any conceptual distinctions, since not only do both kinds of people ultimately suffer the same variety of intellectual failing – a bad epistemic sensibility – there's also significant overlap in the explanations of these deficiencies between the two categories[21]. I nevertheless think it is helpful to divide the discussion in this way, because the two categories bring different issues to the fore. Exploring bad judgement in pursuit of bad ends brings into focus the relationship between my account and accounts that look to explain all vices in terms of our epistemic ends. Bad judgement in pursuit of good ends, meanwhile, is both the more puzzling of the two phenomena, and the more central for our present investigation.

4.1 Bad Judgement, Bad Ends

People who have developed judgement in the pursuit of bad epistemic ends, although less interesting for an inquiry that is looking to expand our conception of intellectual vice beyond people with bad ends, are nonetheless an important part of an account of this hitherto unacknowledged form of viciousness. They are also the more straightforward to explain. To see why, it will be helpful to reflect upon one more Aristotelian distinction. In his own discussion of practical wisdom, Aristotle is clear to state that he does not understand it as a mere capacity for good means-end deliberation, the ability "to do the actions that tend towards the aim we have set before ourselves, and to achieve it" (*NE* VI.12.1144a). This, rather, is *cleverness*, a capacity that can be put towards either good or bad ends. It is only when cleverness is exercised in the pursuit of good ends does it constitute practical wisdom: only if "the aim is noble, then the cleverness is praiseworthy; if it is bad, then it is villainy. This is why both practically wise and villainous people are called clever" (*ibid.*). So, according to the Aristotelian conception, we can only have practical wisdom if we have the right ends.

[21] For a start, the bad judgement of some people with good ends is ultimately explicable by their having bad ends at some prior point or in a different domain, as I will argue in Section 4.2. Furthermore, the element of socialisation that will come to the fore in the context of my discussion of bad judgement in pursuit of bad ends, also in Section 4.2, may also apply to bad judgement in pursuit of bad ends.

In defining practical wisdom in this way Aristotle is not, to use Hursthouse's term, understanding it to be a simple 'hybrid': skill in technical, means-end deliberation that happens to be aimed at the right ends. If this were the case then the point about there being a difference between cleverness and practical wisdom as intellectual capacities would be at best a mere terminological point, and at worst an *ad hoc* distinction which only obedience to Aristotle could compel us to follow. Such a reading, however, understates the extent of the symbiosis between practical wisdom and what Aristotle calls character virtue, or having the right appetitive dispositions or ends. We have seen that agents need experience before they can fully develop practical wisdom: it is not a capacity that we find in the young or immature. This experience will itself be determined partly by the ends we have: "maturing virtue will shape the experience gained, and thereby the expertise" (Hursthouse 2006: 305). In other words, the ends we have, our desires and motivations, shape the way we perceive and understand experiences and how we will respond to them, and this in turn will shape the quality of our judgement. Whilst the practically wise and the clever might share certain skills and characteristics, there are insights available to the former that the latter will miss out on.

An example might be helpful here. Presenting a poorly received paper is never a pleasant experience. However, one's underlying reasons for presenting the paper in the first place will shape both their emotional response to this experience and the lasting impact it has upon their judgement going forward. Someone whose main motivation in their intellectual life is to be well thought of – or, failing that, not poorly thought of – would find the disdain of their peers unbearable and resolve not to present a paper in future unless they are totally convinced by the strength of their ideas. Someone else, who is in academia for the love of knowledge and who is desperate to solve the particular problem they are working on, might appreciate the discomfiting value of the experience, and understand that feedback from their peers, even if negative, is important if they are ever to make progress. Both have hit upon an insight that will help them achieve their goals going forward, and without too much of a stretch we might describe this as contributing to some skill or excellence on their part (we might, in a somewhat ironic way, describe as impressive the first person's ability to isolate themselves from any negative feedback). However, only one of them is adept at pursuing the proper goals of our epistemic lives, and only one could conceivably be regarded as wise.

If we accept this plausible Aristotelian point, then we will see that the motivationally vicious will also, most likely, lack the good judgement that is characteristic of the virtuous agent, because their bad ends will have shaped their experience of the world[22]. In light of this, one might be tempted to argue for a more unified account of the intellectual vices than the disjunctive view that I am presenting here. My claim is that traits might be vicious in two ways: if they are directed towards bad epistemic ends, or if they involve some entrenched

[22] One point this should emphasise is that the 'badness' of bad judgement is not the badness of being ineffective at pursuing one's ends. Rather, it is the badness of being poorly attuned to the epistemic requirements of a situation. The person with bad judgement *and* good ends will, as a matter of fact, be ineffective at pursuing their ends, but it would be a mistake to identify their viciousness directly with this ineffectiveness.

form of bad judgement. Since those who lack the proper epistemic ends also thereby lack practical wisdom, however, we might think that rather than supplementing the motivational approach, an account of bad judgement actually *subsumes* it. In other words, rather than identifying vice with either a deficiency in ends or in practical wisdom we can simply identify it with the latter, since this (the previous discussion has suggested) also covers the former.

Although appealingly elegant, I do not take this strategy. This is partly because I am sceptical that the connection between bad ends and mere cleverness is a conceptual claim. Even if there is a strong causal connection between having virtuous ends and acquiring the knowledge that is necessary for practical wisdom (or, perhaps more accurately, a strong causal connection between *failing* to have virtuous ends and *failing* to develop practical wisdom), I do not think it is impossible that one could have the same quality of judgement as the fully virtuous person whilst lacking their ends. Perhaps there are certain ends that are close enough to virtuous ends that aiming for these will enable an agent to develop a sensibility that closely resembles, at least within a given domain, those that the virtuous agent would require. Less speculatively, it seems possible that someone might have led a life of virtue for many years, only for a dispiriting experience to lead them to suddenly abandon any interest in the epistemic good[23]. One can drop one's ends relatively abruptly, whilst the quality of one's judgement likely requires a more gradual process of decay.

A theoretically more significant reason to retain these two types of viciousness as independent phenomena is that doing so allows us to retain the idea that there is something distinctively vicious about having an inappropriate orientation towards epistemic goods. The analysis that motivational theorists provide – that the failure to be motivated by certain core epistemic goods is something that is vicious in its own right – is, as I noted in my discussion of the motivational approach, compelling. If there is someone who genuinely desires some form of ignorance, or who desires epistemic goods only so that they could lord over others, locating their viciousness only in some epistemic sensibility would fail to do them justice. Their traits, of course, might be vicious in more than one way: they aim at epistemic bads, and also are poorly attuned to epistemically relevant considerations. The desire for epistemic bads, however, remains problematic in its own right.

4.2 Bad Judgement, Good Ends

So much for bad judgement in pursuit of bad ends, but what of people who have bad epistemic sensibilities despite a genuine concern for the epistemic good? This, as I have repeatedly noted, is the central case for our present analysis, since it is the viciousness of such agents that is mysterious on a pure motivational account. Furthermore, the issue of how such

[23] This claim is relatively controversial, insofar as it mirrors an example discussed in the wisdom literature. In endorsing this possibility, I am siding with Dennis Whitcomb's initial claim that a 'depressed sage' who loses their lust for life remains wise (2010b), against Jason Baehr's claim that they do not (2012).

people come to go wrong in their judgement is, on the face of it, a bit more puzzling than those with bad ends. If these people are epistemically well-intentioned, and their deficient sensibilities are not due to some cognitive incapacity or immaturity, then where does their bad judgement come from?

Of course, one explanation is that, at a previous point, their ends *were* problematic, but they no longer are. This is an intuitive explanation for someone like Dave. We would probably not be surprised if we were to discover that Dave, as a younger man, in fact had only really been interested in preserving his sense of his own superiority. His perception of epistemic saliences thus developed in ways that would facilitate this: setting store by formal markers of education, surrounding himself with like-minded people, and so on. This experience shaped his judgement to such an extent that, even when he later began to care more for actual epistemic goods, he nonetheless retained the same problematic sensibilities as before. In essence, this is just the inverse of the argument made in the previous sub-section about someone who abandons a lifelong commitment towards epistemic goods and yet retains the quality of judgement that this inculcated. The expertise that the practically wise person draws upon is not something codifiable, that can be easily picked-up or learnt in a crash course. As Zagzebski argues, when considering whether a Nozickian transformation machine could make somebody virtuous at the touch of a button, practical wisdom "is logically connected with experience, at least for humans, so it is logically impossible for humans to obtain virtue without experience" (1996: 120). Practical wisdom develops over time; even if someone does reconceive their epistemic goals a lag before their developing virtue proper, if they ever do, is probably inevitable. In the meantime, they will likely retain many of their vicious dispositions.

Through a similar process, a lack of care in one area of one's epistemic life might lead to vice in a different area. As I outlined in Chapter 1, I understand vices, for the most part, not as global aspects of one's character, but rather as potentially quite local and domain-specific dispositions. Someone's intellectual character concerning their interest in literature or the discussion of politics might be very different from the character they manifest when considering issues to do with religion or their work. That one can display a particular vice in one area and not in another, however, does not mean that these two areas are neatly compartmentalised and separated. As such, a failure to pursue truth or understanding committedly in one domain may engender a false belief or foster a disposition that constitutes a vice in a different area of one's life. Perhaps Galileo, for example, was always wholly committed to the pursuit of truth in science, but he was intellectually lazy or negligent concerning matters of self-knowledge, and never fully reflected upon the true extent of his own intellectual superiority and the implications that it had for his relations with others. It was this lazy assumption of his own superiority that facilitated his closed-mindedness and arrogance within the separate domain of his scientific inquiries[24].

[24] The point here is related to arguments made by Medina (2013), Cassam (2015), and Battaly (2016b). Both Medina and Cassam argue that certain vices are self-concealing: closed-mindedness, for examples undermines

One worry about these explanations of bad judgement is that they seem to undermine my argument, *pace* the motivational approach, that not all vices can be accommodated by a view that focusses exclusively on the quality of an agent's ends. This is because it might seem like I am suggesting that, in these the cases, the viciousness of bad judgement ultimately still arises from Dave and Galileo's having bad ends. After all, it was their bad ends (either in the past, or in a separate domain of inquiry) that led to their having bad judgement.

This claim, that if we explain bad judgement by reference to bad ends then we are letting the motivational approach in through the back door, is somewhat premature, since I will shortly turn to a source of bad judgement that does not relate to any motivational failing on the part of an individual agent. However, even taken on its own terms it would still be a mistake to claim that Dave and Galileo's viciousness, on these readings, fundamentally consists in a motivational failing. To draw this conclusion would be to conflate the *nature* of someone's viciousness with the ultimate *cause* of their viciousness. Recall that I am thinking of vices, for the most part, as local or domain specific dispositions. In our discussion of Galileo, we are trying to explain what it is about his systematic dismissal of others' views that makes him vicious, given that he is not doing this in the pursuit of bad epistemic ends. The ultimate reason why he was vicious in this way may have been his laziness or negligence in taking his supposed intellectual superiority for granted, but that is not what is itself problematic about such dismissals. Rather, what is problematic about the way he conducts his scientific inquiries is the peremptory way he treats certain interlocutors or certain points of view, and his inability to accept the possibility that his own view may have been mistaken. These features are constituted by a deficiency in judgement, not by his taking inappropriate ends.

The epistemic ends we take affects the quality of our judgement, in ways that reverberate through time and across our epistemic character. It is also possible, however, for our judgement to be corrupted in ways that have nothing to do with the quality of our epistemic ends. Indeed, perhaps the most important cause of bad judgement is our *socialisation*. This is a point that Fricker is keenly aware of in her development of a virtue theoretical account of testimony. As she notes, there are two inputs into the development of one's character: one individual, and one social. These influence an agent in roughly that order:

> Ethical sensibility is given its first form by our being inculcated into the attitudes of the day. But we are soon in a position to criticize these attitudes, and so we may, social pressures permitting, come to distance ourselves from any given commitment. (Fricker 2007: 82)

A great deal of the experience we draw upon in the formation of our epistemic sensibilities is collective experience. Different societies and social groups think of certain

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the very dispositions one needs to exercise in order to come to terms with one's own failings. Battaly extends this point by noting that such traits also inhibit the recognition of other vices.

people as trustworthy, certain sources as authoritative, certain forms of inquiry as responsible, and so on, and at a young age our engagement with the world is almost entirely governed by these attitudes that we inherit from our broader social milieu. Soon enough, however, we develop the reflective critical capacities that allow us to call this tradition into question. To do so in ways that lead to the development of practical wisdom, we have seen, likely requires having the appropriate epistemic ends. However, it can be more or less easy to break free from our epistemic socialisation, with certain environments more domineering and presenting fewer avenues for critical disengagement than others. It is conceivable, for example, that Dave inhabited a social environment in which he never really had much of a choice about how to interact with groups of people from different backgrounds; not impossible, for sure, but perhaps to do so would either have required a dose of good epistemic fortune or an unusually developed intellectual character from a young age. Nonetheless, Dave is still someone who does not take seriously the viewpoints of people with a state education or working-class accent. These facts about his environment should not stop us thinking of him as viciously closed-minded or snobbish.

Some would perhaps balk at this claim. In effect, I have suggested that Dave might have been unable to prevent his character from becoming intellectually vicious, or at least that it might have been exceptionally difficult for him to do so. If we assume that all vices are blameworthy, and that blameworthiness implies some level of control over that for which we are blamed, then it seems we are forced to conclude that Dave was not, after all, vicious. Heather Battaly (2016a), notably, has worried that the conventional responsibilist conception of virtues as praiseworthy and vices as blameworthy leaves us unable to class the vast majority of traits as virtues or vices, precisely because we lack control over the development of our characters. It is this worry that underpins her rejection of responsibilism, at least when it comes to the analysis of most of our traits, and her adoption of a view she calls 'personalism', in which vices share all the same features as the conventional responsibilist picture minus the stipulation that we are responsible and blameworthy for them.

Battaly is right to point out that most people have much less of a say in the make-up of their character than virtue epistemologists have often assumed, although I am less convinced that we generally have *no* control over our traits, or that if we do lack any such control we can therefore not be blamed or praised for their possession[25]. However, even if we were to grant these two further claims, the conclusion to draw would not be that responsibilists have been talking about the wrong kind of trait all along, or that there are two types of character vice, one of which renders us blameworthy and one of which does not. Rather, this would simply demonstrate the importance of the claim I made back in Chapter 1: that we should be wary of drawing too close a connection between vice and blame. Blame, as I suggested, should not have a monopoly on our reactive attitudes to vice: what is

[25] A number of theorists have tried to decouple the close link between blame and control. See, notably, Watson (1996) and Sher (2006).

characteristic of vice is not that people are blamed for them, but that their possession makes us think less of that person in just the personal way that Battaly identifies. Even if we acknowledge that Dave was just the product of his environment and thus decide that it is not right to *blame* him for his closed-mindedness, this does not mean we should not resent this aspect of his character or think of him as an inferior intellectual agent than someone more open-minded.

5 Some Complications

The purpose of this chapter has been to highlight the role that practical wisdom, or good judgement, has to play in a plausible conception of intellectual virtue, and consider how this can help us expand our understanding of intellectual vice. Briefly, I have suggested that there are two central types of intellectual vice: vices that involve the disposition to take bad epistemic ends, and vices that involve entrenched patterns of bad judgement. Much of the inspiration for this work has been drawn from virtue ethics, where practical wisdom plays a much more prominent role than in virtue epistemology, and I believe the problems faced by an exclusive focus upon bad motivations when theorising vice is one of that manifestations of this oversight. Nonetheless, this is not to say that work on practical wisdom can be seamlessly or self-evidently transferred from one domain to the other; indeed, as I suggested towards the end of Section 1, where I briefly considered why it is that practical wisdom has thus far played such a peripheral role within virtue epistemology, there are some *prima facie* plausible reasons to be sceptical to think that practical wisdom is applicable in the intellectual domain. In this section I will draw the present discussion of bad judgement to a close by considering two of these: the claim that it is *theoretical*, not practical, wisdom that should be of interest to epistemologists (Section 5.1); and the worry that invoking bad judgement to explain intellectual vice commits us to an unpalatable unity of the vices thesis (Section 5.2).

5.1 Two Types of Wisdom

In Section 1 I explored briefly the distinction Aristotle draws between the rational and the appetitive parts of the soul, a distinction that bears significant responsibility for the long history of Western philosophers presuming moral and intellectual virtues to be of fundamentally different sorts. Similarly influential has been a distinction he draws between two sub-parts of the rational soul: the *speculative*, or theoretical, part; and the *calculative*, or practical part (*NE* VI.1.1139a). Each of these parts, tradition states, has its own characteristic form of wisdom: theoretical and practical wisdom. Briefly, the objection I am considering here is that it is a category error to think of the *intellectual* virtues – the 'virtues of the mind'

– as requiring *practical* wisdom. Practical wisdom, this objection states, is a distinctly moral notion. The kind of wisdom relevant to the life of the mind is theoretical wisdom.

The distinction between practical and theoretical wisdom is another instance where Aristotle has left us with a deep-rooted distinction, his own grounds for which appear rather spurious. His basic claim is that the parts of the soul to which theoretical wisdom [*sophia*] and practical wisdom [*phronesis*] belong are concerned with fundamentally different sorts of truths: respectively, "one with which we contemplate those things whose first principles cannot be otherwise, and another those things whose first principles can be otherwise" (*ibid.*). In other words, the speculative part of the soul is concerned with necessary, or *a priori*, truths, whilst the practical is concerned with the contingent, or *a posteriori*. Excellence in reasoning about how to live a good life, or practical wisdom, is thus clearly a quality of the practical part of the soul, since it is concerned with things that could be otherwise; one does not and will not necessarily live a good life. Theoretical wisdom, meanwhile, is excellence in reasoning about the most basic and fundamental features of reality: the theoretically wise will "not only know what follows from the first principles of a science, but also have a true understanding of those first principles… it is scientific knowledge of the most honourable matters" (*NE* VI.7.1141a).

Carving up practical and theoretical wisdom in this way, however, is not intuitively plausible. After all, it seems possible both that we can be theoretically wise about contingent truths, and that practical wisdom can involve an application of quite general, perhaps even necessary principles. To borrow two sets of examples from Baehr, one's theoretical wisdom might arise from a grasp of the principles of theoretical physics (a "domain governed by laws that could have been other than what they are") or economics (a domain concerned with truths that are not logically necessary), whilst practical wisdom presumably involves (albeit is not reducible to) the application of principles that are at least very general, if not necessary (Baehr 2012: 84-85). Nonetheless, this has not prevented a range of contemporary theorists presuming that there is some distinction between theoretical and practical wisdom, with the former generally presented as something like a particularly deep or valuable form of understanding, and the latter as a form of good judgement (Zagzebski 1996; Whitcomb 2010b; Baehr 2012[26]).

This more modern way of understanding the distinction between theoretical and practical wisdom already hints at my response to this first objection. Recall that in thinking about intellectual virtue we are thinking about a particular kind of good epistemic feature: the character traits that make one an excellent intellectual agent. We are not talking about the possession of any set of epistemic goods, or the kind of thing that we might more

[26] This is just one possibility Baehr countenances for theoretical wisdom. He also accepts the possibility that it is an ability or competence aimed at certain cognitive states, something much closer to practical wisdom. On this view the boundaries between practical and theoretical wisdom, and thus the worry I am considering, dissolve; as Baehr notes, theoretical wisdom becomes "one dimension or application of practical wisdom" (2012: 90).

commonly describe as intelligence. As we saw in Chapter 1, part of the reason the intellectual virtues have come to the fore in epistemology is the recognition of the fact that our lives as epistemic agents are not simply a matter of the passive acquisition of knowledge or the disinterested application of a given set of epistemic skills, but are inherently active and social. Excellence as an intellectual agent is more than just a matter of excellence of thought or reasoning; it requires making choices, feeling the appropriate emotional responses, and acting in certain ways. The virtues that are constitutive of excellence in this domain require practical wisdom, the capacity to know how to think or act in a particular situation, just as much as the virtues that are constitutive of excellence in the ethical domain. For sure, practical wisdom has a broader realm of application than in our intellectual affairs, but I do not claim that it is a uniquely intellectual phenomenon. Rather, practical wisdom is a matter of good judgement about how to live an excellent human life. Insofar as being a good intellectual agent is part of this overarching goal, practical wisdom is an irreducible part of this.

5.2 The Unity of the Vices?

A second worry we might have about grounding some forms of viciousness in deficiencies of practical wisdom is derived from the role practical wisdom plays in Aristotle's controversial unity of the virtues thesis. Recall the Aristotelian picture sketched in Section 1. The familiar ethical virtues, things like courage, temperance, and generosity, are, properly speaking, virtues of character: they are excellences in our appetitive nature. These are then perfected, and become 'full' virtue, through the exercise of practical wisdom, a single over-arching intellectual virtue concerning excellence in deliberation about how to live a good life. It is this picture that underlies the unity of the virtues: one only has real virtue if one has practical wisdom, but one only has practical wisdom if one actually has the right ends, and thus will have all the virtues.

Whilst the unity of the virtues thesis, that one can only have any virtue if one has all the virtues, remains widely disputed (see, for an overview, Badhwar 1996), there is a relatively intuitive thought underpinning it. Moral virtues were traditionally understood as traits that are conducive to the living of a good human life. For any given virtue to actually conduce to the good life, however, it will need to be mediated and tempered by other virtues. If one is courageous but not kind, the classic example goes, one will be capable of all sorts of villainy; but similarly, if one is kind but not courageous, one might be tempted to spare someone's feelings when they actually need the harsh truth. Even those who do not endorse the unity thesis, therefore, often argue that the truly virtuous agent has some capacity to mediate and combine their individual virtues, which in a given situation may well be pulling in different directions, and decide on a single course of action. This is a role that is generally assigned to the virtue of practical wisdom (e.g. Zagzebski 1996).

I do not wish to take a stance on the unity of the virtues thesis here. What I do want to argue is that, even if there is something intuitive to the idea underpinning it, we certainly do not want to say the same of the unity of the *vices*. Even if, in many situations, there is only one appropriate course of action and it will require the possession of a whole plethora of virtues to recognise this, it still seems possible that there is a whole variety of different ways in which one could go *wrong* in that situation. As Aristotle himself noted, quoting approvingly some unknown theorist, "good people are just good, while bad people are bad in all sorts of ways" (*NE* II.6.1107b). The worry with the view I am presenting in the chapter, however, is that it might seem to commit us to a variant of just such an unpalatable unity thesis. If we stay faithful to Aristotle, that is, we are forced to say that there are a variety of appetitive, or motivational, virtues, but only one virtue of practical wisdom. Consequently, even if we can make sense of the idea that there is more than one form of motivational vice, since our ends can go wrong in a variety of different ways, it looks like all forms of bad judgement are the consequence of deficiencies in the single trait of practical wisdom. Humility, servility, unrefined curiosity, and a wide variety of vices that I have not yet touched upon will have to be understood as, at best, different manifestations of the same underlying trait.

Thankfully, we do not have to adopt this position. The insight that I want to take from Aristotle is his recognition that neither an appetitive nor a rational excellence are sufficient for virtue; this is the lesson that can be learned from the failure of the motivational approach, and it is the reason Aristotle felt the need to include practical wisdom in his definition of real virtue. However, because of how he understood the nature of the soul, as divided into two separate parts each with their own functions and forms of virtue, Aristotle could not make sense of these components as constituents of the *same* trait; hence his need to postulate an intellectual virtue that works with but is not, properly speaking, part of character virtue. We are not committed to Aristotle's division between the two parts of the soul, and consequently we are not committed to thinking of the relation between character virtue and practical wisdom in this way. Rather, I would suggest we think of any single virtue as a conjunction of two parts: it is both the motivation towards epistemic goods, and a particular form of good judgement in what kinds of things are pursuant to these goals. Conversely, vice is a deficiency in either of these components. All agents who go wrong through some failing in judgement are vicious in much the same way, since they all have a cultivated sensibility towards some inappropriate set of considerations. Different vices, however, are sensitive to different kinds of consideration: the servile are overly sensitive to their own limitations, the person who is undiscerning in their curiosity lacking in a sensitivity to variations in intellectual significance, and so on[27].

[27] Thinking of practical wisdom in this way, as part of each virtue rather than a single underlying virtue, also helps ward off the worry, also mentioned in Section 1, that grounding vice in practical wisdom seems circular. The claim is not that intellectual vices derive their viciousness from a further intellectual vice – bad judgement – that partly constitutes these traits ('But then', the obvious question would be, 'what makes *that* trait a vice'?). Rather, I am saying that bad judgement is a *way* in which traits are intellectually vicious.

Taking this position does not require abandoning the view that there is a single overarching excellence that mediates our different virtues and unifies them into a single course of action. Just as we can distinguish virtue, or a single good character trait, from 'capital-V Virtue' (to return to language borrowed from Adams in Chapter 2), the property of having a holistically good character, perhaps we can also distinguish people who are practically wise in a singular respect and those who are so in a more holistic way. In the first case we have the practical wisdom characteristic of a single virtue, an attuned sensibility to a particular reason for action. In the second, we have the Practical Wisdom characteristic of Virtue, a sensitivity to the leading of a good intellectual life all things considered. What I have been interested in, first and foremost, is this more localised form of practical wisdom, but I see no reason why different forms of it cannot, at least in theory, conjoin to produce this more general excellence.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a new view of the nature of intellectual vice. At the heart of this is a distinction between two separate, mutually irreducible forms of viciousness. First, as has already been recognised within the literature, there is the viciousness of being disposed to take bad epistemic ends. Second, as I have argued here, there is the viciousness of what I have called bad judgement. Appealing to the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, I have argued that bad judgement primarily consists in a deficiency in an agent's perception of epistemic saliences, or a sensitivity to considerations that characteristically leads them astray in inquiry.

This disjunctive view of vice, incorporating for the first time vices of bad judgement as well as vices of bad ends, makes an explanatorily powerful contribution to the field of vice epistemology. Most significantly, it can account for problem cases for the conventional motivational approach, cases like those of Galileo and Dave who were found to be epistemically vicious despite their ultimately being motivated by the pursuit of epistemic goods. It can also augment our understanding of the nature of individual vices, many of which can take subtly different forms depending on whether they involve, in any specific case, a deficiency of ends or a deficiency of judgement. I will illustrate this point in the next chapter, by way of an in-depth study of the vice of intellectual snobbery.

5

Intellectual Snobbery: A Case Study

In this thesis, I have argued for a new understanding of the nature of intellectual vice. According to this model there are two ways in which our character traits can be intellectually vicious. First, some traits are vicious because they are aimed towards bad epistemic ends. Second, some traits are vicious because they are constituted by an entrenched pattern of what I have called bad judgement. This view of the nature of vice is not intended solely as a general account of the different types of vice, with the specific vices divided into vices of ends and vices of judgement. Rather, it can also prove enlightening about the nature of specific vices, with certain vices able to take the form of either a vice of ends, or a vice of judgement. In this chapter I will illustrate this point through a case study of a paradigmatic vice of this form: the vice of *intellectual snobbery*.

We all know intellectual snobs. I say 'we' in the knowledge that this chapter will be read mostly by academic philosophers, with academia generally and philosophy specifically domains in which intellectual snobbery is particularly rife[1]. Most philosophers will have witnessed, if not been on the receiving end of, a colleague dismissing an area of research as 'not *real* philosophy', or making a subtly pointed comment about the quality of journal in which a paper has been published, or writing off a job applicant because they got their PhD from an unfashionable department. However, I also say 'we' in a broader sense, since

[1] This is an anecdotal observation, although on the account offered below it would make sense that intellectual snobbery would flourish within academia. For a start, I argue that snobbery is a corruption of our capacity to make intellectual evaluations, and such evaluations are a central part of academia. Furthermore, academia is replete with the markers of intellectual status (publications, awards, fellowships) that facilitate snobbish judgements.

intellectual snobbery – characterised roughly as a dismissive assumption of intellectual superiority – is a pervasive phenomenon that extends far beyond academia. The pretentious friend who only ever reads classical fiction and who takes great pride in the fact that they have never read any of the *Harry Potter* books, the sneering commenter on an online news story who chooses to correct their interlocutor's grammar rather than actually addressing the substance of their arguments, the man at a dinner party who studied at Oxford thirty years ago yet who still assumes that he is the smartest person in the room: all of these are plausibly exhibiting forms of intellectual snobbery.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 1, I explain what I mean when I refer to snobbery as a distinctively intellectual vice, rather than an ethical vice that happens to manifest itself in the intellectual domain. Then, in Section 2, I outline what I take to be the core feature of intellectual snobbery: that it is a disposition to make intellectual evaluations on the basis of an appeal to intellectual status, rather than on an object's intellectual merits. Making intellectual evaluations via an appeal to intellectual status is not necessarily problematic; indeed, I shall argue that it is a common and important part of our intellectual lives. However, in Section 3 I identify two ways in which this disposition is vicious. This gives rise to two separate forms of intellectually vicious snobbery: the viciousness of having snobbish ends, and the viciousness of having a snobbish intellectual sensibility. The remainder of the chapter is then devoted to discussion of snobbish sensibilities, which as a vice of bad judgement is the less familiar of the two types of snobbery introduced. In particular, in Section 4, I discuss three complications that this account of snobbish sensibilities faces, complications that focus on the claims that snobbish evaluations of this form are *irresponsible*, and that they are evaluations of one's *own superiority*. I then conclude in Section 5.

1 Snobbery as an Intellectual Vice

The claim that the kinds of characters just introduced – people who dismiss other people's arguments on the basis of their grammar, or who presume superiority on the basis of a long distant university education – might be exhibiting some form of vice is, I take it, fairly uncontroversial. Things get a little bit more complicated when we question what *kind* of vice they're exhibiting: is it an intellectual vice, or is it a moral vice operating in the intellectual domain? To answer this question, we will need to directly address an issue that has hitherto featured only in the background of the discussion in this thesis: the relation between the intellectual vices and the ethical vices.

There are a whole host of complexities that arise when we turn to consider the relations that obtain between the ethical and intellectual virtues and vices. At the most general level, we might question on what basis, if at all, we can distinguish between the two

categories. This has been a simmering topic of debate since Linda Zagzebski first argued that the intellectual virtues are really a sub-category of the ethical virtues. Provided we understand the notion of ethical virtue in a way that is continuous with the Ancients' understanding of the term, as traits that enable us to live a good or flourishing life, then I am sympathetic to this claim, although I do not intend to discuss it here[2]. More relevant for present purposes are the issues raised when we consider specific virtues or vices that straddle the divide between the two in a more obvious way. These might be character traits that seem to centrally require both epistemic and ethical elements, such as honesty or arrogance. Or, they might be character traits that seem to be best understood as a specific epistemic instantiation of a more general ethical category, such as intellectual courage or intellectual laziness.

It is this latter possibility that is suggestive of one way of thinking about intellectual snobbery. Compare, for example, Jason Baehr's account of intellectual courage. In developing an account of intellectual courage, Baehr first offers an account of courage *simpliciter*, which involves "responding in a certain way to a conflict between the achievement of a particular good and one's own safety or well-being". He then argues that what makes *intellectual* courage specifically intellectual is simply that "the good in question is necessarily an intellectual one" (Baehr 2011: 164). There is therefore nothing distinctively intellectual about this disposition; instead, it is a more general tendency that can apply in the intellectual domain, just as it can in any other. Similarly, we might reasonably conclude that snobbery *simpliciter* is an ethical vice, and provide an account of intellectual snobbery by first providing an account of this more general trait before extrapolating to the epistemic case. So, if we characterise snobbery as, say, a tendency to unjustifiably presume some level of superiority over another because one occupies a certain social position, we would then define intellectual snobbery as presuming some level of superiority over another because one occupies a particular *intellectual* position. The intellectual snob will think him or herself a better person on account of some intellectual fact about themselves.

In some fairly paradigmatic cases, ethical snobbery does indeed operate in this intellectually-hued way. In his list of "things we can use as an excuse for looking down on some of our fellow human beings" (Westacott 2012: 101-2), introduced as part of a discussion of ethical snobbery, Emrys Westacott includes education, erudition, occupation, institutional associations, mode of speech, and reading habits, all of which are at least partially intellectual. However, this is only an intellectual trait in, at most, a very derivative sense. It picks out an ethical failing, that of taking oneself to be better than some other individual or group, and it is entirely incidental that the basis on which this judgement of superiority is made is an intellectual consideration. This can be contrasted with intellectual courage, which even if understood along Baehr's lines, as a sub-type of a more general trait, is nevertheless understood as a disposition that is specifically helpful in intellectual tasks and activities. Someone who is intellectually courageous in this sense will be better equipped to

[2] Both Driver (2003) and Baehr (2011) disagree with Zagzebski on this score. For a helpful overview of this debate, see Battaly (2013a).

face the demands of inquiry than someone who is not. It is not obvious, however, that intellectual snobbery, understood along these lines, says anything at all about one's propensities specifically as an intellectual agent.

For the remainder of this chapter, then, I will set aside this sense of intellectual snobbery, as an ethical trait that in some instances happens to take intellectual objects. Instead, I want to focus on intellectual snobbery as a trait that is distinctively intellectual, and thus which is partly constitutive of one's *intellectual* character. Specifically, I will argue that intellectual snobbery, of the form I am considering, is a corruption of one of our most fundamental epistemic practices: what I will refer to as the practice of making *intellectual evaluations*. Intellectual evaluations are assessments of some object as good or bad in a way that is distinctively intellectual. Judgements that a proposition is true or false, that an article is interesting or boring, or that a methodology is appropriate or inappropriate for a particular line of inquiry are all varieties of intellectual evaluation.

As these examples suggest, I intend to use this term broadly along a variety of axes. First, we make intellectual evaluations about all manner of different objects. These might include propositions, arguments, other intellectual agents, intellectual objects (such as books or institutions), and intellectual practices. Crucially for my argument, as will become apparent over the course of this chapter, we can also make intellectual evaluations about ourselves. Second, I am being fairly pluralistic about the values that these evaluations can appeal to. They might be narrowly epistemic and therefore truth-related, as when we assess the truth of a proposition, the credibility of an interlocutor, or the validity of an argument. Alternatively, they might be intellectual in a wider sense, as when we assess a book as worth reading, a research area as worth engaging in, or a university as worth attending[3]. Although not conventionally epistemic, I class these evaluations as intellectual since they are evaluations that concern how one conducts and directs oneself as an intellectual agent: the projects they engage in, the ways they conduct their inquiries, the habits and sensibilities they look to cultivate, and so on. Third, some intellectual evaluations are categorical (as when we judge a proposition to be true) and some are relative (as when we judge this argument to be more convincing than that one). And fourth, intellectual evaluations can be either occurrent or dispositional. That is, they might involve a specific act of judging something (say, the act of believing what someone said), or a continuing and perhaps subconscious form of evaluation (as in someone who has a standing preference for a particular type of literature).

Intellectual evaluations, understood in this broad way, are clearly a central part of our intellectual lives. Accordingly, it is important that we conduct them in a responsible

[3] Some objects might plausibly be apt for more than one form of evaluation, such as books or films that might be assessed both intellectually and aesthetically (for a discussion of aesthetic snobbery, see Kieran 2010). The boundaries between these different domains of value will not be sharp, but when I do employ examples that are potentially ambiguous in this way I am hoping as far as possible to treat the intellectual concerns as isolable.

fashion. Entrenched failures to do so, as I shall argue is the case in intellectual snobbery, will be a notable mark against our character.

2 The Core of Intellectual Snobbery

In what way do intellectual snobs go wrong when making intellectual evaluations? One possibility, familiar from our everyday use of the word, is that someone is a snob simply if they have some robust tendency to evaluate one category of objects as better than another category. One paradigmatic example of this would be the coffee snob, someone with encyclopaedic knowledge of the different beans, roasting processes, and brewing methods that can go into producing a cup of coffee and a taste only for the finest combination of these different factors. Examples will be familiar from the intellectual domain too: we might sometimes gently deride a friend as a snob over their refined taste in literature, or if they turn down the offer to share a section of a newspaper once they realise that it is a red-top, not a broadsheet.

This colloquial use of snob, however, is clearly too broad to capture the idea that snobbery is a vice. This is because there is nothing wrong, in itself, with being a connoisseur, or even with judging some things to be intellectually superior to others. Indeed, this is one of the difficulties with theorising intellectual snobbery, as opposed to its ethical counterpart. As Westacott has argued, ethical snobbery in its more extreme forms "takes us to the idea that the lives and well-being of some people are less valuable than those of others" (Westacott 2012: 133). Ethical snobs think of some people, *qua* people, as better or worse than others on account of some fact about their social status, a view that clashes directly with a basic commitment to egalitarianism. As such, a disposition to make *any* such judgements should be vilified. Most of us, however, are in the habit of making even quite strong claims of intellectual superiority or inferiority, not only about objects ('Oxford is one of the finest universities in the world') but also about people ('As the teacher she was best placed to adjudicate the dispute'). As I suggested in the previous section, such evaluations are not only permissible, they are a central part of our epistemic lives. Intellectual virtue should not require that we shy away from making these evaluations; rather, it should require that we make them in an epistemically responsible fashion.

The question at hand, then, is how do we differentiate the properly discerning intellectual agent from the intellectual snob. We can begin to discern an answer by reflecting further on the examples introduced at the beginning of this section. Let's focus on the coffee snob. I noted that the kind of person I initially had in mind was not just someone who talks a good game, but someone with both a detailed knowledge of the various elements that go into producing a good cup of coffee, and a refined palate that can appreciate how these elements come together. This kind of coffee snob – perhaps not someone you'd want to be

stuck in conversation with, but also not someone in whom it is easy to find much to fault – is very different from the coffee snob who only ever drinks single origin flat whites not because they actually prefer them, but because they want to be the kind of person associated with that kind of coffee. The first person is less a snob than a connoisseur, someone who makes strong but reasonable judgements about quality based upon the actual elements and features of the things in question. If either of these people has some vice of snobbery it is the second person, the one who drinks certain types of coffee only because they want to "set [themselves] above the herd" (Kieran 2010: 244).

This distinction between two types of coffee drinker, one a studied connoisseur and the other someone who is merely trying to mark themselves out as better than 'mainstream' coffee drinkers, is central to Matthew Kieran's (2010) discussion of aesthetic snobbery. Kieran's claim is that it is not the simple fact of coming to some conclusion about superiority and inferiority that makes someone a snob; rather, it is *how* they come to this conclusion, the reasons that it is based upon. Specifically, judgements about superiority are not snobbish provided they are actually based upon the appreciation of the object in question; the selective taste of our connoisseur is not snobbish, that is, because it is driven by an actual appreciation of the factors that an appreciator of coffee should be attuned to (taste, aroma, and so on). A snobbish judgement, meanwhile, is one where "aesthetically irrelevant social features play a causal role" in shaping one's judgements. Specifically, the true snob is someone whose appreciative judgements are driven by a desire "to feel or appear superior relative to some other individual or group" (*ibid.*: 244).

In Section 3 I will argue that Kieran's construal of the kinds of inappropriate reasons upon which snobs base their judgements is too narrow for an account of intellectual snobbery. Not all snobs, that is, are motivated by an active desire to elevate themselves. Nonetheless, the insight that snobbery is fundamentally about the factors on which we base our evaluations, not the content of the evaluations themselves, is a helpful one, which can also be seen at work in the other, more intellectual examples I introduced at the beginning of this section. It is not necessarily symptomatic of an intellectually vicious character to prefer certain newspapers or certain books over others; after all, it is plausible that some newspapers are actually better than others, and that the intellectual agent in question is simply tracking this difference in quality. It is more obviously problematic to prefer a newspaper because you think that reading that particular newspaper itself makes you more refined or more intelligent than people who read other newspapers.

What I want to argue, then, is that intellectual snobbery is fundamentally a matter of making intellectual evaluations on the basis of a certain set of inappropriate reasons. To explain more precisely what the inappropriate reasons that are characteristic of snobbish evaluations are, it will be helpful to distinguish between two things: a given object's

intellectual *merits*, and its intellectual *status*[4]. Intellectual merit is a term I use to pick out an object's actual intellectual good points, its strengths, proficiencies, benefits, and so on. Clearly this is a loose and heterogeneous category; there is no one quality that is the quality of being intellectually meritorious, and for the most part it won't make sense to talk of one thing as being more intellectually meritorious *simpliciter* than another. Rather, what constitutes an intellectual merit in a specific case will be determined both by the nature of the object in question and the context of the evaluation. So, for example, the intellectual merits of a person might be their intellectual virtues, skills, or intelligence, the merits of an argument might include its validity or its explanatory power, the merits of a university might be the quality of education it provides or its research output, and so on.

Intellectual status, on the other hand, refers to the reputation an object enjoys: the way it is perceived or the extent to which it is esteemed, *qua* intellectual object, within a society or social group. Of course, to an extent this will just be a matter of perceived intellectual merit. If, over the course of a conversation, an interlocutor reveals themselves to be highly knowledgeable then we often do, and probably should, esteem them for their knowledge in this domain. However, the relation between status and merit is considerably more complex than such simple cases would indicate. First, we do not always award people intellectual status after directly *perceiving* their intellectual merits; indeed, this might not even by the most common reason for doing so. Sometimes one will award status following a testimonial report, as when a trusted friend tells them that some third party is '*the* person to talk to about this'. Furthermore, within a social context certain features can develop such a close connection to intellectual merit that the possession of that feature will itself serve to convey intellectual status, even without any direct evidence of intellectual merit. All sorts of properties can play this status-marking role, from the useful (like the distinctive black covering of the *Penguin Classics* book series) to the more obviously problematic (such as a person's accent; Kinzler and DeJesus 2013). Second, other culturally defined values help determine which objects acquire intellectual status that do not have even this indirect link to intellectual merit. Within the UK context, for example, qualities like sobriety, tradition, and eloquence all get bound up with intellectual status, even though none of these are straightforwardly reducible to intellectual merit.

Properly speaking, intellectual evaluations are evaluations of an object's intellectual merits. After all, intellectual evaluations are assessments of a particular object's intellectual good points and bad points, and intellectual merit just is the catch-all term I am using to refer to intellectual good points. However, this does not mean these evaluations will always be based upon direct appreciation of these merits. My suggestion is that at the heart of intellectual snobbery is a disposition to make intellectual evaluations not through any direct assessment of an object's intellectual merits, but rather through an appeal to intellectual

[4] Henceforth, I shall use 'object' as the generic term for the object of one's evaluations. As I have already noted, this picks not just actual intellectual objects (books, articles, institutions), but also people, processes, arguments, and more.

status. Just as the coffee snob decides which coffee to drink not by assessing the actual qualities of different coffees but rather by considering the status they enjoy and how drinking it would reflect upon him, the intellectual snob will judge which people to listen to, which arguments to take seriously, and which newspapers to read on the basis not of their actual qualities but of the intellectual reputation that they enjoy.

3 Two Types of Snobbery

I have suggested that intellectual snobbery centrally involves a disposition to make intellectual evaluations through an appeal to intellectual status, or to judge things as better or worse in some distinctively intellectual way on account of the reputation they enjoy. Whilst this characterisation is an important part of an account of intellectual snobbery – in essence, it describes what it is that snobs do – it does not yet pick out a disposition that is necessarily vicious, let alone one that is vicious in a way that is distinctively snobbish. In this section I will explain these two points in turn, before providing a full account of the vice of intellectual snobbery.

The disposition to make judgements on the basis of intellectual status is not always intellectually vicious. There are potentially intellectual evaluations that are never appropriate to base upon an appeal to status; it is probably never appropriate to judge someone's arguments as valid or invalid because of some fact about that person's status, for example. Nevertheless, we do make use of intellectual status when making judgements that, for example, a certain book is worth reading, a particular expert would be a good informant, a tried and tested methodology would be appropriate for some present inquiry, and so on. Furthermore, judgements of this form do not seem obviously problematic. In the previous section I noted various ways in which intellectual status is socially constituted, the implication being that the status things enjoy and their actual intellectual merits can and often do come apart. However, that our subjective and inter-subjective assignments of intellectual status are imperfectly calibrated to intellectual merit does not mean that there is usually no correlation between the two[5]; after all, I also noted that intellectual status is, at least to some extent, a matter of directly or indirectly perceived intellectual merit. In the absence of the time, skills, or resources in which to assess merit directly, basing our intellectual evaluations upon the status an object enjoys can serve as a valuable, and probably indispensable, work-around.

So not all appeals to intellectual status are obviously vicious. What's more, even if we do focus just on those that do seem to be intuitively problematic, it is by no means clear even that all of *these* are best described as snobbish. People can respond to intellectual status in

[5] I will have much more to say about this correlation in Section 4.1.

different ways. One prospective student attending an open day at the University of Oxford, having previously attended a prestigious public school and with a family history of elite university attendance, might reflect upon the illustrious history, imposing architecture, and international reputation and conclude that this is where somebody like them should be educated. Another student at the same open day, but who will be the first member of their family to attend university and who had hitherto been educated in modern state schools, might reflect upon the same facts about Oxford and conclude that they do not belong at a place like this. Both of these people allow their intellectual evaluations (in this case, concerning which people deserve to be educated at certain institutions) to be influenced by irrelevant facts pertaining to intellectual status (namely, the reputation they enjoy as someone educated at a certain school or from a certain kind of family). Even if we might think that they both have some form of vice, it is presumably only the person who thinks that people with backgrounds like their own belong at Oxford that we would class as a snob[6].

In light of these complications, what we need is an explanation of both when a disposition to evaluate things based on their intellectual status is intellectually vicious, and when it is vicious in a way that is distinctively snobbish. The first thing to note, in connection to the latter issue, is the close link between snobbery and superiority. That is, we reserve accusations of snobbery for the subset of judgements that seem to reflect a preoccupation with one's own superiority, or a tendency to look down one's nose at others. This is a feature of our ordinary language use of snobbery, as was seen in the discussion of the two prospective university applicants above: central to the example was the insinuation that the privileged student felt that they (unlike at least some other people) deserved to go to Oxford simply because of their background. This connection to superiority, and the concomitant idea of snobbery as something sneery, is also a feature of the few extant philosophical accounts of different types of snobbery. We have seen that Kieran thinks that the reasons upon which an aesthetic snob bases their appreciative judgements are reasons that pertain to "elevating an individual's status with respect to some individual or group" (2010: 244). Similarly, Robert Roberts and Jay Wood, who provide a definition of intellectual snobbery, identify it with a "disposition to associate oneself, in thought and practice, with persons of high social rank, intellect, and taste, and to shun or contemn persons of lower rank" (Roberts and Wood 2007: 236-7)[7]. Westacott's general account of ethical snobbery, finally, identifies it with "believing without sufficient justification that you are superior to another person in certain respects because you belong to or are associated with some group that you think places you above them in a social hierarchy" (Westacott 2012: 115).

[6] In claiming that both these people may have some form of vice I am not claiming that we should react to each of them in the same way. That the judgements of the privileged person elicit a different reaction to the those of the under-privileged person (blame or contempt, say, rather than pity or indignation) is perhaps evidence that it is a different type of viciousness at play in each case, as will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.

[7] As far as I am aware, Roberts and Wood's is the only previous attempt to provide a definition specifically of intellectual snobbery (although there is not, in fact, anything distinctively intellectual about this account). Their discussion, however, is limited to this one-line definition.

What is interesting to observe about these definitions of snobbery is that the reference to one's own superiority that is distinctive of snobbish judgements is introduced in two distinct ways. Both Kieran and Roberts and Wood identify snobbery as something aspirational, as a motivated attempt to feel or appear superior to some other individual or group. We can call these *active* accounts of snobbery. Applied to the intellectual domain, this is the snobbery of someone who gets involved in a research project because it is a hot topic and they want to appear on trend, who grants more credence to an eloquent and witty interlocutor only because they want to feel like they're on their intellectual level, or who scoffs condescendingly at someone who reads tabloid newspapers in an attempt to set themselves apart as more serious and discerning than that. Of course, the desire to appear on trend need not be the *only* reason this kind of snob engages in the research project, and nor need it be a conscious and calculated ploy[8]. Furthermore, this person may actually already think of themselves as in fact superior; active forms of this snobbery perhaps invoke images of the insecure, but it is not their territory alone. What is crucial for this kind of snobbery is that the desire to elevate oneself or shore up one's (perceived) pre-existing superiority plays some role in their motivational structure.

Not all accounts of snobbery construe it as something active in this way. As Westacott observes, we also refer to people as snobs if they are disposed to evaluate themselves as superior to others, and they do so on the basis of some relevant set of social reasons. This is an example of what I will call a *passive* account of snobbery, in which the problem is not that one wants to feel or appear superior and that this desire influences their practices of intellectual evaluation, but that one already presumes oneself to *be* superior, and does so on inappropriate grounds[9]. This is the form of snobbery implied in my discussion of the snooty open day student, who judges himself to be worthy of Oxford (or Oxford to be worthy of him) on the basis of irrelevant facts about his intellectual status. It also extends to other cases in the intellectual domain, such as people who presume themselves to be smarter than others on account of their university education, who take bad grammar or a working-class accent to be a good reason not to engage with someone's arguments, or who dismiss areas like feminist philosophy or applied philosophy as not 'real' philosophy.

It would be a mistake to try to provide an account of intellectual snobbery that is either exclusively passive or exclusively active. There is something distinctively snobbish about the person who purposefully orders their epistemic affairs in an attempt to make

[8] Recall my discussion of virtuous motivation in Chapter 1, where I argued that it is not necessary for an agent to believe they are motivated by epistemic goods in order for them to actually be so. Similarly, the fact that making a certain evaluation will affirm one's elevated place in the intellectual standings can be part of what motivates them to make that evaluation, even if they are not aware of this.

[9] Shklar (1984) is the only theorist I am aware of who distinguishes between two types of snobbery, and she does so in a way that can be read as tracking this active/ passive distinction (see footnote 10 below). Interestingly, it is much more common for dictionaries to do so. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, defines as snobbish both someone who "who wishes to be regarded as a person of social importance" and someone who "despises those whom he or she considers to be inferior in rank, attainment, or taste" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2018).

themselves feel or appear intellectually superior to other people, just as there is something distinctively snobbish about the person who believes that their taste in literature or Oxbridge education ensures that they actually are intellectually superior to other people. What's more, neither of these forms of snobbery is reducible to the other[10]: the active snob need not necessarily succeed in making themselves *believe* that they are actually superior, whilst the passive snob may never question their presumed superiority sufficiently for it to be something they actually *desire*.

What this distinction between two types of snobbery reaffirms, then, is the importance of acknowledging two distinct types of intellectual vice. I have argued that there are two types of intellectually vicious character traits: those that are motivated by bad epistemic ends, and those that embody an entrenched pattern of bad epistemic judgement. Thus, on this account, we can acknowledge the possibility of two distinct types of snobbery:

> SNOBBISH ENDS: The disposition to make intellectual evaluations that are based (at least in part) on an object's intellectual status, and to do so in an attempt to feel or appear superior to some other individual or group.
>
> SNOBBISH SENSIBILITY: The disposition to make an irresponsible evaluation of one's own intellectual superiority relative to some other individual or group, and to do so because one is excessively attuned to considerations of intellectual status.

This distinction between two types of vice, we can now note, maps neatly onto the distinction between active and passive forms of snobbery. The taking of snobbish ends is an active form of snobbery, in which someone purposefully orders their intellectual life in ways that will make them feel or appear superior relative to others. This is the form of viciousness that was central to the motivational approach, the viciousness of someone whose main concern in their epistemic affairs is not the acquisition or promotion of epistemic goods. The possession of a snobbish sensibility, meanwhile, is a form of what I have called passive snobbery. This is the snobbery of someone who grants too much salience to considerations of intellectual status, in a way that leads them to judge themselves as intellectually superior to others. This is snobbery as a form of bad judgement.

[10] *Pace,* perhaps, Shklar, who distinguishes between 'primary' and 'secondary' snobbery. The former is specifically a class-based snobbery (the "old interplay of climbing commoner and haughty nobleman"; 1984: 84), whilst the latter is a more general attitude in which someone "closes himself off from his fellow men and… lacks a sense of his own and other people's equal rights" (*ibid.*: 101). This relation of primacy, however, seems to be a chronological claim about the eras in which these forms of snobbery arose, rather than a conceptual claim.

4 Snobbish Sensibilities

I have argued that there are two types of intellectual snobbery: a snobbery of ends, and a snobbery in sensibility. Whilst both types of snobbery involve dispositions to make intellectual evaluations by way of some problematic appeal to intellectual status, the actual *grounds* of their viciousness are distinct and irreducible, and this is a point that can be readily accommodated by my bifurcated conception of intellectual vice. First, the viciousness of the person with snobbish ends is that their appeals to intellectual status are motivated by a concern to feel or appear superior to others, rather than a concern for epistemic goods. Second, the viciousness of the person with a snobbish sensibility is a matter of their having an entrenched pattern of bad judgement, a poorly calibrated sensitivity to considerations of intellectual status that leads them to make irresponsible evaluations of their own superiority.

In this next section I will add more detail to my picture of snobbish sensibilities, a discussion that should prove helpful not only when thinking about snobbish sensibilities specifically, but also about how bad judgement operates in practice more generally. In particular, I will do two things. First, in Section 4.1, I will explain what exactly I mean when I describe the person with a snobbish sensibility's evaluations of their own superiority as *irresponsible,* and why this is important in our judging this person as snobbish. Then, in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, I will explore some points about the *content* of their evaluations; specifically, why it is that I specify that they make an evaluation of their own superiority, the implications this has for the breadth of snobbish judgements, and whether it is *ad hoc* to limit my account in this way. My focus here is primarily on snobbish sensibilities since the viciousness at play in snobbish ends is the more familiar and intuitive, representing as it does the form of viciousness that has been the focus of the conventional motivational approach to vice. Accordingly, whilst I will at various points draw contrasts between snobbery in sensibility and snobbery in ends that will hopefully prove mutually illuminating, I will not offer much more by way of direct discussion of this latter form of snobbery.

4.1 Proxies and Responsibility

In Section 3 I noted that, far from being an always irresponsible basis for our intellectual evaluations, considerations of intellectual status actually have an important role to play in our epistemic lives. What is wrong with the intellectual snob, I have argued, is not simply *that* they appeal to facts about intellectual status when making intellectual evaluations, but *how* it is they do so. This point is relatively clear when it comes to the person with snobbish ends, who is not really using intellectual status as a work-around measure of intellectual merit at all. Intellectual status enters into their evaluations not because of its role as a helpful gauge for intellectual merit, but rather because their main concern when making an evaluation is

how it will make them feel or appear relative to others. Allowing intellectual status to influence our judgements in this way is never an intellectually responsible thing to do[11].

Things, however, are less straightforward, and certainly less categorical, when we turn to consider snobbish sensibilities. To illustrate this point, consider the example of a man who presumes some level of intellectual superiority over his interlocutors simply because he once studied history at Oxford. Depending on how we specify the missing details of this example, this judgement can be made to look either entirely responsible or paradigmatically snobbish. If the form of intellectual superiority in question is the superiority of being more knowledgeable about 20th Century European history then there is, in fact, nothing obviously irresponsible about his making an evaluation along these lines, provided it is not held dogmatically and it remains open to counter-evidence. If, however, he makes this same judgement despite the fact that his interlocutor has demonstrated that she is a keen amateur historian, or if his evaluation is not simply that he is more knowledgeable about this area of history but that his Oxford education makes him more intelligent *simpliciter*, then the suggestion of snobbery returns.

To clarify why it is that one of these judgements is responsible and the others irresponsible it will be helpful to first say a bit more precisely what I have in mind when I describe intellectual status as a 'work-around' in evaluations of intellectual merit. When employed in this way, we can think of intellectual status as serving as a *proxy* for intellectual merit. Proxies, generally speaking, are variables that are correlated to some further variable – let's call this the target variable – that one wishes to measure. Proxies are useful when the target variable is itself either unobservable or else very difficult to observe directly, whilst the proxy is something to which one has comparatively easy access. The level of the proxy variable can thus be used to provide some indication of the level of the target variable. A classic example of a proxy relation is the relation between GDP per capita and a population's well-being. The level of well-being of entire populations is useful information for various social scientists and policy makers, yet it is also something that would often be impossibly resource-consuming to measure directly. However, many theorists suppose that there is at least some correlation between this general level of well-being and GDP per capita, with the latter something that is much easier to measure directly. Consequently, GDP per capita can be used as a proxy for well-being (Clinton 2004). This same relationship obtains, at least at times, between intellectual status and intellectual merit: we do not always have the time, skills, or resources to measure intellectual merit directly, whilst markers of intellectual status like degrees, awards, and rankings, are often easily accessible. In cases where there is some correlation between these markers and actual intellectual merit, the use of status as a proxy might be the best gauge of merit available.

[11] Note that the desire to feel or appear superior to some other individual or group is importantly distinct from several less problematic desires. For example, it is not the same as the desire to enjoy the credit that one is actually due, and nor is it the same as the desire to undertake projects or tasks of epistemic self-improvement that will, in fact, make oneself intellectually superior to others.

Thinking about status as a proxy, however, also helps us to get a grip on its limitations, since using something as a proxy will be a responsible thing to do only when certain conditions hold. There are at least three elements to this. First, there is the question of whether there is in fact a correlation between status and merit in a given case, and if so what the *strength* of that correlation is. In essence, this point simply restates the principle that underpins the use of a proxy, since proxies are reliant for their explanatory power on the presence of a correlation between two variables: where there is no significant correlation between the two, the use of one as a proxy for the other is irresponsible. However, this is not merely a binary issue, such that status and merit are either correlated or they are not. Rather, correlations can be graded as either weak or strong, and the closer the relationship of covariance between the two the more robust evaluations one is licensed to make on its basis. Conversely, in cases where the relation between status and merit is more tenuous, it will only license judgements that are much more easily defeasible.

The second point to make concerning when it is responsible to appeal to status as a proxy concerns the availability of *alternative evidence*. The purpose of a proxy, we have seen, is to serve as a stand-in in the absence of directly observable evidence. As a general rule, it would therefore be irresponsible to ignore better, more direct evidence if it is available. Similarly, even if one is responsible in employing a proxy at a given point in time, the evaluations that we make upon its basis should always be defeasible and open to revision if alternative evidence were to arise. This point is closely related to the previous point, concerning the strength of the proxy relation, since one way of understanding this latter point is that the stronger the correlation the more contrary evidence one can responsibly ignore. Within the community of academic philosophers there is probably quite a strong correlation between someone's enjoying a positive intellectual status *qua* philosopher and their actually being intellectually meritorious in at least some of the ways that are constitutive of being a good philosopher. Consequently, someone who has never read Wittgenstein's work would not be irresponsible in judging him to be a good philosopher based upon his intellectual status, and indeed to continue to do so even after reading some of his work and finding it underwhelming. The correlation between the intellectual merits of people and the universities they attend will probably be much weaker, so our university graduate should not presume a superior grasp of 20th Century history simply in virtue of their education if their interlocutor reveals themselves to be a keen amateur historian.

There are two subsidiary points concerning proxy strength to note here. First, proxies can be asymmetrically strong, such that even if the awarding of some form of status is fairly reliably correlated with intellectual merit, this need not entail that the *failure* to be awarded that level of status is equally reliably correlated with a lack of intellectual merit. The status of academic philosophers is a case in point. Whilst I have suggested that there is probably a reasonably reliable connection between being esteemed as a good philosopher and actually being a good philosopher, the connection between someone's *not* enjoying that status and their not being a good philosopher is probably much weaker; after all, it is increasingly widely acknowledged that the philosophical canon continues to systematically under-value the

contributions of women, people of colour, and non-Western philosophers (Anderson 2015; Salami 2015). As such, to dismiss someone as an insignificant philosopher simply because you have not heard of them is a much less responsible thing to do. Second, the strength of a correlation between status and merit need not remain constant, and in many cases will degrade over time. Again, our graduate is a case in point. Whilst there may well be quite a strong correlation between the possession of a good history degree and actually having the skills required to succeed in academic history immediately after graduating, it will likely be much weaker thirty years down the line.

The first two points to note about the responsible use of a status as a proxy for merit are that there should actually be a correlation between the two, and that the agent should remain appropriately sensitive to alternative evidence. The third point is to note that, even where these two conditions are met, intellectual status will likely only warrant inferences of a limited *scope*. I have been using intellectual merit loosely, as a catch-all to accommodate the full diversity of positive intellectual qualities that different objects can have. In most cases, even justifiably earned intellectual status will correlate with only a few of these, and as such can only be responsibly used as a proxy in a limited class of intellectual evaluations. It is very unlikely that any measure of intellectual status will license very general inferences, in which certain things are judged to be more meritorious than others *simpliciter*. To return to our university graduate, whilst we can acknowledge that a good history degree probably correlates fairly reliably, at least in the short term, with the knowledge, skills, and virtues required to succeed as a historian, it will probably correlate much less reliably, if at all, with other academic or non-academic categories of intellectual merit. As such, the graduate should not assume that their having this degree signifies that they are intellectually superior in these other areas too.

There are, then, at least three conditions for the responsible use of status as a proxy for merit: there should be a sufficiently strong correlation between the two, the agent should remain sensitive to alternative evidence of merit, and the evaluation made on its basis should not be overly broad in scope. With this framework in place, we can see what is wrong with the person with a snobbish sensibility. Vices of bad judgement, I argued in Chapter 4, consist in an agent having a certain pattern of attention, in which they are overly sensitive to certain considerations and unduly dismissive of (or oblivious to) others. In keeping with this picture, the person with a snobbish sensibility is someone who is *too* sensitive to considerations of intellectual status. They perceive intellectual status to be more pressing or salient than it in fact is, and alternative evidence of intellectual merit will strike them as either irrelevant to or less significant for their evaluations. As a consequence, they rely too heavily on facts about status when making their intellectual evaluations, a reliance that will lead them to habitually make evaluations that are irresponsibly strong or broad.

4.2 The Objects of Snobbish Sensibilities

As we have seen, the sensitivity to intellectual status that is constitutive of snobbish sensibilities does not give rise to just any set of irresponsible intellectual evaluations. Rather, the vice of intellectual snobbery is reserved specifically for people who make judgements of their *own superiority*, relative to some other individual or group. In the remainder of this section I will address two difficulties that follow from this feature of my account. In Section 4.3, I will consider the worry that delineating snobbish judgements like this might be, in some problematic sense, arbitrary or *ad hoc*. First, I will address a difficulty that arises more directly from this stipulation: that intellectual snobs seem to make a much broader array of evaluations than judgements of their own superiority. The objects of a snob's evaluations, in other words, are more diverse than simply their own intellectual merits.

Again, a comparison with the snobbery of ends is illuminating here. As I argued in Section 3, some connection with personal superiority is a ubiquitous feature both of ordinary language and philosophical accounts of snobbery, but the two types of snobbery I have identified bring in this connection in different ways. In the case of snobbish ends, the connection comes in at the level of what the snob is aiming for in their intellectual life, which is to feel or appear superior to others. This desire can corrupt evaluations about all sorts of different objects: they might choose to read newspapers that make them appear intelligent, cite theorists or discuss topics that are currently fashionable, treat junior colleagues as their epistemic inferiors, and so on. In the case of snobbish sensibilities, however, the connection to superiority comes in not at the level of motivations, but in the actual conclusions the snob draws. What is distinctive about this kind of snob is that they judge *themselves* to be superior, and do so on the basis of some irresponsible appeal to intellectual status. If this self-focus is central to this form of snobbery, however, then does this mean that this form of snobbery *only* manifests itself in judgements about their own merits? Can this kind of snob not also make judgements of other people, or of some of the diverse array of objects that can feature in our intellectual evaluations?

The first manifestation of this difficulty, concerning whether the person with a snobbish sensibility can make evaluations of other people as well as of themselves, is the easier to deal with; indeed, the answer has already come through in my characterisation of snobbish sensibilities, as a disposition to make evaluations of one's own superiority *relative to some other individual or group*. Superiority, as this characterisation indicates, is an inherently relative notion. It entails not only seeing yourself as better than some other group or individual, but also seeing this other group or individual as being inferior than you. These, of course, are two sides of the same coin: whilst the history graduate discussed above might be said to think of himself as superior to people without a university education, he equally thinks of people without a university education as inferior to him. Whilst one or other of these evaluations might be foremost in an agent's thoughts at a particular point, such that we might describe him as either looking down on others or thinking too much of himself,

snobbery essentially involves both. As Judith Shklar puts it, snobbery requires both an "upwards striving" and a "kick aimed downwards" (1984: 89).

Even if my characterisation of snobbish sensibilities can readily accommodate snobbish judgements about other people, the possibility of there being snobbish judgements about 'things' (such as objects, institutions, and methodologies) still seems to pose difficulties. Take the example of someone who, in their spare time, will only ever read weighty classics of literature. Let's rule out, for argument's sake, the possibility that this person has snobbish ends; that is, in the case we are going to consider their predilection for 19th Century literature is in no part an affectation but is rather a genuine belief that reading 'light fiction' is a waste of time. We might nonetheless still think there is something snobbish about such a categorical dismissal of a whole class of books, not least one that is defined in terms of its accessibility and mass appeal.

My account of snobbish sensibilities can, however, accommodate this intuition, at least indirectly. This is because whilst this person's evaluations are primarily about the merits of different types of literature, it is likely that in wrinkling his nose at light fiction he is also making evaluations about different kinds of people. For a start, his taste in literature might itself be guided, in part, by judgements about the genres of literature that are appropriate for different kinds of people. He might dismiss certain types of writing as 'chick lit', say, or as suitable only for people without the education to appreciate the classics. These dismissals are premissed upon judgements about the respective merits of different groups of people, judgements that are based upon facts about their intellectual status and that, at least tacitly, class him as one of the intellectually superior. Such judgements are, of course, paradigmatically snobbish. Insofar as we can separate his judgements about these different kinds of people from his judgements of the merits of different types of literature (a separation that will be artificial; really, the two are bundled up together), it is in virtue of the former that he counts as a snob.

Suppose, however, that this is not the case with our putative literature snob. Perhaps he maintains that light fiction is a totally vacuous form of literature devoid of any intellectual merit, but does so without presupposing a condescending view of any particular type of person; we are *all*, as he might put it, 'better than that'. There is a further explanation that might account for the intuition that there is nonetheless something snobbish about him. There is, admittedly, nothing snobbish about this evaluation of light fiction *per se* on my account, since this does not involve a judgement of his own superiority. Nonetheless, we may suspect that he is displaying a different form of snobbery: the snobbery of evaluating yourself as intellectually superior *on the basis of your intellectual evaluations*. Tastes, preferences, and judgement are all viable candidates for designations of intellectual status: people can be and often are intellectually revered for their taste in literature, film, radio stations, and so on. This creates space for a form of higher-order snobbery, according to which the light fiction cynic thinks himself to be superior because he, unlike everyone else, has seen the light when it comes to literature, and prides himself on this fact. Again, we can see that there are,

properly speaking, two different evaluations going on here: the evaluation of some intellectual 'thing' (namely, light fiction) and an evaluation of type of person (people who like light fiction). And again, properly speaking, it is in virtue of this second evaluation, not the first, that this person is snobbish.

There are thus two ways in which a snobbish sensibility can affect what appear to be evaluations about the intellectual merits of things: it can be a sense of one's own superiority that underlies these evaluations, and one can judge oneself to be superior on the basis of these evaluations. If we were to strip this example of any hint of either of these attitudes, and indeed of any attendant evaluation of one's own superiority, then on my account we would be forced to conclude that this person is not, after all, being intellectually snobbish. However, far from being a problem for my view, this is an implication I am happy to accept[12]. The kind of character this would present us with is a person who concludes, on the basis of its intellectual reputation, that light fiction is not something from which they will gain anything, but who maintains that there is nothing intellectually inferior about those who do read it. Harbouring a blanket and stubborn aversion to a whole family of literature like this may well be intellectually vicious in some way; it might be closed-minded, or prejudiced, or a form of epistemic insensibility[13]. However, in the absence of some judgement about the relative intellectual merits of different types of people, an ascription of snobbery just does not seem quite right.

4.3 Snobbery and Vice Ontology

I have argued that snobbery in sensibilities is essentially a matter of being too sensitive to intellectual status, such that one habitually makes irresponsible intellectual evaluations. However, not all irresponsible evaluations made on the basis of one's intellectual status are snobbish, as we saw in Section 3 with the example of a first-generation university student who is cowed by the grand surroundings of Oxford. It is for this reason that I stipulated that intellectual snobbery of this form is specifically a matter of making judgements of one's own superiority. The under-privileged open day attendee may have a vice of some form, but it does not seem right to call them a snob. The question I will now address is whether there is something problematically *ad hoc* about this argumentative move.

To see why we might be suspicious of my stipulation that the person with a snobbish sensibility judges themselves to be superior, it will be helpful to draw a contrast with the

[12] The thrust of this view is shared with Westacott, who suggests that 'snobbery about things' is only problematic insofar as it leads to snobbery about people. As he puts it, the main problem with the former is "the tendency for snobbery about things (which we may view as acceptable) to bleed through into snobbery about people (which we generally condemn)" (Westacott 2012: 143). We differ in that Westacott claims that these evaluations are still a form of snobbery, just not a vicious one, whilst I argue they are not best described as snobbish at all.
[13] For more on the vice of epistemic insensibility, in which someone fails to appreciate an intellectual endeavour that it is in fact appropriate to appreciate and does so because they wrongly assume it is not epistemically good, see Battaly (2013b).

familiar Aristotelian picture of two kinds of vice: vices of excess, and vices of deficiency. According to this conventional story, each virtue represents a 'golden mean' regarding certain feelings and actions, so that to have that virtue is to perform that act or feel that emotion neither too frequently nor too rarely[14]. There are then two vices that accompany each virtue, a vice of excess that involves performing a certain class of action (to focus on the behavioural part) too much, and a vice of deficiency that involves performing that action too infrequently. So, someone is cowardly if they run away from danger too regularly, whilst they are foolhardy or rash if they never run away from fear at all. Cowardice and foolhardiness, although related as two dispositions in the same sphere of feeling or action, are thus fundamentally different traits, since they each involve reacting to fear in very different ways.

This is a very different picture to the contrast between the viciousness of someone with a snobbish sensibility, who habitually judges themselves to be superior on the basis of their intellectual status, and the viciousness of someone with a self-deprecating sensibility, who habitually judges themselves to be *inferior* on the basis of their intellectual status. The underlying sensitivities of both people are similar: both, after all, are too sensitive to considerations of intellectual status, and this leads them to make irresponsible judgements about their own intellectual merits. The key difference between them is less a matter of their sensibility – less a matter, that is, of their psychological features – and more a matter of the conclusions they reach about their own place in some intellectual ranking on the basis of it. On what grounds, then, do we distinguish between these as two distinct character traits? Would it not make more sense to say that there is one vice here, the vice of being too sensitive to considerations of intellectual status, and that this can lead people to either view themselves as superior or as inferior depending upon their actual status or other facts about their psychology? In identifying these as two distinct traits, it seems like I am making an *ad hoc* stipulation to bring my account in line with ordinary language usage, rather than actually identifying a distinctive psychological disposition.

This potential objection to my view is, in fact, hinting at much larger questions about the differentiation of vices, an issue that Quassim Cassam has termed 'vice ontology'. The central question here is "to what are analyses of concepts of specific epistemic vices answerable?" (Cassam 2017b: 21). As Cassam goes on to note, whilst the obvious answer to this question might be that our analyses of specific vices are answerable to the nature of those vices themselves, it is not entirely clear in what sense these vices actually have a 'nature' that we can capture. In doing vice epistemology are we trying to map discrete dispositions that have a real and independent nature, and thus to discover boundaries between traits that existed prior to our theorising? Or is vice epistemology less a matter of discovering boundaries and more a matter of drawing them, of trying to "introduce a degree of systematicity into a domain that lacks it" (*ibid.*: 24)? Cassam's stance is that the theorising of specific vices is at least partially a project of imposition, rather than one of discovery. Even if our processes of

[14] This is a stylised version of Aristotle's actual picture, but it should suffice for the purposes of the contrast I wish to draw here.

identifying and attributing vices assume that there are common psychological causes or mechanisms that underpin those vices, there are nevertheless a whole variety of different ways in which we could order and systematise these different causes and mechanisms. Which system is appropriate or 'right' at a particular point will be as much a matter of human interests and concerns as the underlying psychological features[15].

This picture Cassam presents, of vice epistemology as an attempt to "bring some order to the chaos of ordinary thinking" (*ibid.*) is helpful for thinking about bad judgement generally, and snobbish sensibilities in particular. Theorising vices of bad judgement is as much a matter of imposing order as it is discovering it, of identifying patterns as it is isolating discrete traits. Perhaps, in terms of the underlying psychological process, there is not much difference between the snob and the self-deprecating person, since both are too sensitive to markers of intellectual status. Nonetheless, the explanatory power and practical utility of our vice epistemology is augmented by parsing these vices in this way. Not only is it more consistent with ordinary language usage, it allows us to acknowledge, for example, that these two traits typically arise from different backstories, with snobbery a paradigmatic vice of privilege and the disposition to self-deprecate a trait that we might more frequently find in the marginalised[16]. Similarly, it is consistent with the idea that we should respond to these traits in different ways, both in terms of the reactive attitudes we hold towards them (we typically resent snobbery in a way we do not resent self-deprecation) and in terms of the strategies we take to deal with them (both people need to become less attentive to markers of intellectual status, but this will involve building the self-deprecatory person up rather than knocking them down). And finally, it is consistent with the idea that the two vices may well be linked to different characteristic harms, both epistemic and otherwise.

My stipulation that snobbery in sensibilities is a vice in which the person who is overly sensitive to intellectual status habitually makes evaluations of their own superiority might, therefore, be *ad hoc* in the sense that it is not carving up psychological processes at their joints. However, as Cassam is right to point out, it is questionable that this is really what we are trying to do when we do vice epistemology. Rather, the aim of this field is at least in part to try and bring order to the messy domain of intellectual character, to recognise patterns of thought, feeling, and action that are helpful both in our theorising and in our practical lives. In bringing it into line with ordinary thinking about snobbery, this stipulation on snobbish sensibilities helps us do just that.

[15] Compare our classifications of disease, which are attempts to impose order upon real underlying patterns of symptoms and underlying causes. As Cassam notes, however, the boundary conditions between different types of disease are, in a sense, imposed by us; we can classify diseases by bodily region, organ, effect, disease process, and so on, with none of these representing the absolute 'right' way to order them (Cassam 2017b: 24).

[16] This is a point made by Medina, who notes that "among the cognitive consequences [of oppression] for marginalized subjects is the feeling of intellectual inferiority, a poor self-assessment of one's cognitive assets and capacities" (Medina 2013: 41).

5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to argue that there are, in fact, two distinct forms of intellectual snobbery. The snobbery of ends, I have argued, is the snobbery of someone who allows their intellectual evaluations to be corrupted by their desire to feel or appear superior relative to others. The snobbery of sensibilities, meanwhile, involves being over-sensitive to and thus over-influenced by intellectual status, a sensibility which leads an agent to make irresponsible evaluations of their own intellectual superiority. It is a testament to the explanatory power of my bifurcated conception of intellectual vice that it can make sense of both of these snobbish dispositions.

Concluding Remarks

The over-arching aim of this thesis has been to investigate the nature of intellectual vice. Specifically, I have sought to establish that the two most prominent extant analyses of intellectual viciousness – accounts in which vice involves having bad epistemic motivations, and accounts in which vice requires being disposed to produce bad epistemic consequences – face serious difficulties. The motivational approach fails to explain the viciousness of agents who genuinely care about epistemic goods, but who conduct their intellectual affairs in eminently problematic ways. The consequentialist analysis, meanwhile, struggles to accommodate the idea that there is anything distinctively problematic about what I have called the agential vices. My own theory maintains that there are, in fact, two ways of being intellectually vicious. As the motivational theorists have argued, some vices consist in the failure to take appropriate epistemic ends. There is also, however, a hitherto unacknowledged form of viciousness, which is the viciousness of having bad epistemic judgement. This consists primarily in an agent's having bad epistemic sensibilities, that lead them to be overly sensitive to a set of misleading epistemic considerations. I finished by providing an illustration of how this account works in practice, by way of an extended discussion of the vice of intellectual snobbery.

I will conclude by drawing attention to two areas of research that will build upon this project. The first of these, which itself has at least two parts, will be to rectify this thesis' exclusive focus on the characters of individual agents. Specifically, I have not considered the possibility that other types of entity might be intellectually vicious too; for example, that certain *institutions* can be negligent or closed-minded (Fricker 2010), that higher education

policy is epistemically insensible (Battaly 2013b), or that the scientistic *stance* is arrogant and dogmatic (Kidd Forth.). Such accusations are a common feature of our everyday lives, yet they present a host of questions for vice epistemologists to consider. Are these forms of viciousness derivative from individual vice? If not, does my account of individual vice 'scale up' to accommodate these other varieties, or do we need new theories of vice to make sense of them? And how will these theories relate to theories about the corresponding classes of virtue? Such investigations offer not only fertile theoretical terrain, but also the opportunity to glean important practical insights.

Furthermore, I have also not considered the significance of vices within *broader social contexts*. It is a central part of the pre-theoretical notion of viciousness that it is bad. However, a number of theorists have suggested that individual viciousness can, in fact, be an important part of group virtue (Hookway 2003a; Ziv 2011). Perhaps yet more counter-intuitively, whilst we would generally expect that widespread possession of a particular vice within a given context would exacerbate its bad epistemic effects, this may not always be the case. Aldous Huxley once noted one potential example of this phenomenon, when he observed of snobbery that a "society with plenty of snobberies is like a dog with plenty of fleas: it is not likely to become comatose" (1992: 365). Whilst it would waylay me to argue for this point in detail, it is possible that the widespread desire to feel or appear intellectually superior, a desire that is constitutive of the form of snobbery that I have called snobbery of ends, could be conducive to a flourishing intellectual environment, one that is dynamic and open to new and unconventional ideas. Of course, if vice can have these beneficial effects within broader social contexts then this might affect how we chose to respond to an individual's viciousness.

A second area of further research concerns my specific view of intellectual vice, which argues that vice consists in either the taking of bad ends or the possession of bad judgement. The purpose of my discussion of intellectual snobbery was to illustrate how this view works in practice, by looking in some detail at a vice that can take either of these two forms. I have not, however, claimed that *all* specific vices can be analysed in both of these forms. It seems possible, for example, that vices which specifically invoke some mis-orientation of priorities, such as apathy or intellectual cowardice, might not lend themselves to an analysis in terms of judgement, and will instead only be comprehensible in terms of some taking of inappropriate epistemic ends. Furthermore, whilst my discussion of snobbery drew attention to several subtle differences between the two forms, not only in terms of their motivational profile but also the kinds of evaluations they make and their likely genealogies, I have not taken a stance on whether other vices that do lend themselves to a bifurcated analysis also come apart in comparable ways. This will be another angle to consider when undertaking further in-depth studies of specific vices, which will no doubt continue to comprise an important part of vice epistemology.

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